

Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee  
Preston Community Center  
Wednesday, January 8, 2014 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: Janne Kaje, Sally King, Kollin Higgins, Rick Reinlasoder, Claire Dyckman, Clint Loper, Joan Lee, Steve Evans

Other Attendees: Ward Roney, Josh Kubo, Matt Baerwalde, Erick Haakenson, Nancy Hutto, Matt Canfield, Lee Grumman, Larry Pickering, Christine Jensen, Alan Painter

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**Part 1: Welcome Introductions and Follow-up (Tamie Kellogg and Janne Kaje)**

Re-introductions of Committee members and other attendees  
Review of packet materials

**Part 2: Snoqualmie Farming Map Primer (Rick Reinlasoder)**

Review of map and tables showing the various types of farming in the APD.

How was the data gathered?

Mainly by analyzing aerial photos for visible changes (2001, 2006, 2009 and 2013); in general, changes detected would necessitate a ground visit

Can you address distribution outside the APD? (referring to map)

Had analysts look for specific uses indicating agriculture; therefore, properties with any amount of farming may be included

What about the nursery category? (referring to chart slide)

That's a good question, doesn't know off the top of his head.

How is it measured? Methodological changes?

Exact field boundaries were more precise with last (2013) update. Previous versions assigned an entire parcel to a category whereas latest version delineated within parcels.

The large increase in 2007 for nurseries may be tied to development.

In general, farming does not appear to be decreasing, though specific uses may change a little from year to year.

To clarify, are all categories considered ag use?

Rick indicated summary portion at bottom of chart that indicated the color coding in the chart and showed which categories were not ag use.

There appears to have been an increase in the amount of land farmed from 2006-2008. Is this accurate?

In 2006 there were several acres categorized as unknown, which were later determined to be ag. This may account for the apparent increase.

Don't recommend a focus on the year-to-year changes in particular categories due to methodological differences; focus on predominant uses and themes.

If you would like the specific category definitions, please let him know.

More importantly it is important to recognize that this is accurate only for the time of year during which the survey was done.

Note that it is called a 2013 update, but the aerials referenced were from 2012.

Is there a land use difference between North and South APD?

There are less drainage issues in South APD. We can break out the data by north and south for a future meeting.

*Discussion: Are there any specific issues you want brought back for second Ag/farming presentation later this month?*

- Specific category definitions
- Interested in areas of the valley identified as not farmed – Are they farmable? What's happening in the valley other than farming?
- Does the current APD mirror 100-year floodplain?
  - o For the most part, see Map 1 and Map 2 for key info (APD and floodplain overlap)

### **Part 3: Flood Risk Reduction 101 (Sally King)**

*Background: Physical and Policy/Regulatory Context*

Was the most recent flood (2009) a 100-year event? If not, what level?

Frequency of floods depends on the specific gage location. In 2009, the flow measured at Carnation gage in lower Snoqualmie was about 80 year flood (which was flood of record for this location). Several conditions (including snow in lowlands, magnitude and timing of Tolt peak, atmospheric river) combined to create a serious flood (not flood of record in upper Snoqualmie, but still significant).

With regard to lower Snoqualmie valley and deeper flood depths in north end near Duvall vs south end near Fall City; what is the geological reason for deeper water?

Number of factors: primarily, as you progress down the valley, it's flattening and a flatter surface means slower velocity and greater flood depths for a similar floodplain width.

No constriction or rise?

Created by basic topography.

Isn't there a bigger grade at edge of floodplain (i.e., steeper slopes at boundaries)?

Yes. At the valley margin the slopes become very steep.

In north end of APD, do you take into account tides in Snohomish River?

This can have an impact depending upon timing of tidal influence on the Snohomish and magnitude and timing of flows from the Skykomish. For example, the January 2009 flood was not as deep as the 1990 flood in the northern part of the valley, in part due to Snohomish/Skykomish flooding which backed flood waters into the northern Snoqualmie in 1990.

Can you clarify the difference between floodplain vs. floodway vs. FEMA floodway?

The FEMA floodway is based on hydraulic model which "squeezes" the water in a 100 year flood so that there is a one foot rise in water surface elevation, while King County floodway is not based on this one foot rise so the King County floodway is wider and basically same as the floodplain.

FEMA considers "substantial improvement" to be more than a 50% increase in the value of the farmhouse (in context of regulations which prohibit construction of new houses in floodway, but allow substantial improvement of farmhouses in floodway).

Temporary farmworker housing is still considered residential, so same prohibition on "new" construction in floodway applies.

Discussion: From David and Rick's perspective (on background on flooding), what takeaway would they like to highlight?

Radabaugh: He would like to talk about Recreational Vehicles more at some point in the context of providing temporary farmworker housing.

Sally noted using Community Rating System. King County is actually one of the highest rated counties in the entire country for that and consequently landowners in unincorporated King County get lower flood insurance rates. Consequently, FEMA pays more attention to what goes on here.

King County is one of the jurisdictions that does a very good job with flood management.

Bautista: He would like to touch on King County's Flood Hazard Management Plan (FHMP). The FHMP recognizes the Snoqualmie Valley as very unique and very large. The reality is flooding can't be stopped completely, because large structural fixes (like containment levees) are really not an option due to both financial and space limitations. For that reason, the FHMP focuses on things like non-structural elevations.

Sally pointed out the facilities for flood control in the Valley include a higher number of revetments (compared with other parts of King County). The main concern is making sure the riverbank is stable, as opposed to trying to make sure flooding won't occur at all. To an extent, this reduces the number of instances where flood control projects will affect farmland (levees would take up room, revetments do not).

An earlier slide said flooding in the Valley is getting worse? Is that documented?

During 2012 meetings on flood plan update, many people expressed their perception that it was getting worse. While the gage data show some soft trends in that direction, it doesn't totally support it.

He would like to learn more about FEMA floodplain buyouts and the relation between floodplain regulations and Shoreline Management Act.

As a resident of the Valley for 40 years, the floods are getting worse, including both height and speed of water. The programs for elevating houses have been helpful.

Referencing Ric Bautista's point that there's a lot we can't do to control floods, where is the tipping point for what can be done in terms of regulatory flexibility in the Valley before it starts to impact flood insurance rates? There have to be projects or regulatory changes that would still assist farmers in APD without risking increases to everyone's rates.

Does not like the use of the word “perception” because it has a negative connotation. Valley residents have seen the floods get worse, it is not “perception”.

The slide showing break in Hwy 202 is an example of flooding getting worse. The farm in that picture had been there 100 years and never flooded like that before.

King: Appreciates Bobbi’s point about perception.

It is changes in regulations that would have biggest impact on CRS rating and therefore insurance rates.

What if instead of elevating five houses, we elevated all of them? That wouldn’t hurt CRS rating, but it’s a very different level of investment compared to current.

How are the physical boundaries of CRS defined?

It’s countywide within unincorporated areas. There may be some regulatory flexibility specific to certain geographic regions. This may be something to explore.

#### Strategies and Actions to Reduce Flood Risks

There is not enough time to go into everything she wanted to say, but she thinks we need to step back on a lot of issues.. Today’s presentation felt like two meetings worth. The Committee should be solution-based. This was a really large topic for habitat restoration and farmers and we went way too fast. The group needs to have a conversation, rather than only being delivered to. She’s frustrated.

Back on Winkelman slide, she noticed there were lots of oxbows that aren’t connected. It looks like the river has been made narrower. Engineering/geology question – if those oxbows were re-connected would that be a potential solution to help alleviate flooding?

Can’t help but keep going back to regulations in the queue. What potential regulations are coming down the pipeline that will cause further restrictions of farmers’ flood protection measures (e.g., limiting number of critter pads).

You need to look at Biggert-Waters Act and flood insurance issues.

What’s the policy rationale for limiting residential structures in the floodway if they were built elevated to begin with (she asks David)? Will this ever be an option? The state knows better than the farmers? Or what they want?

The underlying concern is the floodway is not the place to put people. Regarding potential changes to state law, it’s not up to him.

This seems like a very one-size fits all approach. She'd like this to be further considered. Is it possible to push that?

Didn't see any mention of soil saturation when it comes to flood storage. If we can lower the water level in saturated soils (i.e., through improved drainage?), this could create quite a bit of extra storage for main flood events.

Has government ever really stopped and thought about why we're having the more recent higher floods? It's more the federal and state regulations (not county). Dikes in Snohomish County have caused more harm than good, it causes more flow on us.

*Small Groups: discussion to help frame issues and identify potential solutions (individual staff people will take notes)*

Kaje: Acknowledged that we could have used a lot more time for dialogue.

We are fully aware of how frustrating it is to take in all this information and not be able to talk about it.

Their patience is needed for one more meeting (on ag next time), but it's important to get some baseline info and then we'll move into a very different part of the process.

#### **Part 4: Fish Update (Kollin Higgins)**

Kollin talked about three follow ups.

- First, when he previously used the phrase "have to" it was not intended to be about a legal mandate, but more of an if/then statement about what is needed if we are to recover salmon.
- The 10 yr goals are roughly 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the 50 yr goals of the Salmon Habitat Plan. There are areas outside of the APD that will help meet significant portions of the off-channel and edge habitat goals,; i.e., the goals for "mainstem restoration" are not just about the mainstem Snoqualmie, but also the Tolt, Raging and SF Skykomish.
- The habitat bottleneck graphic is a different way to show that we need to make progress on the early rearing habitat areas versus working on marginal habitat for later rearing stages.

General: Committee Members like the Habitat Bottleneck slide!

How many acres of early-rearing acres would it take to make the bottleneck match the pour spout?

Is there an estimate?

Higgins: The plan aggregated some categories of habitat types in different ways than we would do today with the aid of hindsight. The answer as not as straightforward as we would like but we will come back at a future meeting with a more complete explanation.

**Part 5: Committee Logistics (Tamie Kellogg and Janne Kaje)**

Field Trip #1: The first tour is going to be offered immediately prior to the next meeting (1/22).

Leave from Snoqualmie Valley Senior Center at 2:30 p.m.

Carpool in King County vans.

Field trip will include one of the major fish projects in lower Tolt, barn elevation and more.

Please give a sense by the end of the week if you would like to attend, so Janne knows how many vans to reserve.

*Please email Tamie Kellogg if you have suggestions, questions or concerns about the meetings.*