

Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood Advisory Committee

Issue Identification and Prioritization

February 12, 2014

SHORTENED “LIST A”: [See detailed list document for issue attributes]

List of identified issues that the Stakeholder Committee will prioritize to identify the most pertinent to work on over the next few months, as time allows. The committee will also develop issue briefs and potentially limited recommendations for those List A items that the committee is unable to consider in depth due to time constraints.

1. **Drainage:** drainage is imperative for keeping farm fields in production, but comes with challenges related to fish habitat and water quality impacts.
2. **Riparian Buffers:** riparian buffers serve a number of functions, most of which positively affect fish habitat and some that positively affect agriculture. There are also negative impacts to agriculture: land taken out of agricultural production, shading of crops, encroachment by wildlife and invasive plants, etc.
3. **Large restoration projects or flood reduction projects in the APD:** large projects have the potential to significantly improve fish and wildlife habitat and offer some benefits to farming (improved flood risk reduction), but may take considerable acreage out of agricultural production
4. **Impacts of large floods:** large floods can erode soil, damage infrastructure, impact farm income, kill livestock and plants, etc.
5. **Floodplain regulations limit fill in floodplain**
6. **Flood safety standards limit options for farm housing within the floodway:** State law prohibits new residences in the floodway, which encompasses a large portion of the Agricultural Production District.
7. **Lack of flexibility in the National Flood Insurance Program’s Community Rating System (CRS) rating system?** The CRS is an incentive program that allows a jurisdiction to lower its flood insurance rates by exceeding National Flood Insurance Program minimum requirements. King County has a high CRS rating and low insurance rates, but meeting CRS requirements may limit regulatory flexibility
8. **Farmland Preservation Program:** the Farmland Preservation Program continues to preserve soil for future generations, but the associated covenants restrict the ability to do larger riparian improvements and flood and fish projects.
9. **Water Quality:** water quality standards can be difficult to meet and the Snoqualmie River does not meet state standards for summer temperature and other water quality parameters. Some impairments directly associated with agricultural lands and practices, but not all.
10. **Impacts from small frequent floods**

- 11. Lack of road maintenance/access in various weather conditions (flooding and snow):** roads critical for farm access and product delivery may not be repaired or maintained in a timely fashion. (Farm)
- 12. Cross-floodplain structures, barriers:** Structures (roads, trails, etc.) and other features (such as forests or other mature vegetation) that extend across the floodplain can back up flood waters.
- 13. Floodgates:** floodgates can keep water off farms during smaller flood events if operating properly, but they may impact fish negatively and may not function as intended.
- 14. Revetments and levees:** revetments and levees can reduce channel migration and bank erosion and some flood impacts, but are typically not good for fish habitat. Current priority framework for maintaining revetments does not value farmland, economics of agriculture, or food security;
- 15. Lack of real time flood information:** Need to clarify what is needed beyond the gage data and flood statistics provided by the county's flood warning system. (Flood and Farm)
- 16. Gravel dredging of mainstem Snoqualmie:** gravel management (removal) may reduce small scale flooding and bank erosion, but it is not a sustainable, long term flood management tool and has negative ecological consequences. (Farm, Fish, and Flood)
- 17. Poor habitat quality in agricultural areas:** fish habitat is not optimal in agricultural areas due to factors such as straightened channels, lack of riparian cover and diminished water quality. (Fish)
- 18. Competing needs for water:** water in the basin is typically in lowest supply (summer and fall) when it is most needed for many fish as well as farmers (irrigation and livestock water).
- 19. Wetlands regulations:** ag wetland regulations at County, state and federal levels can reduce farmland through mitigation requirements.
- 20. Beavers and other wildlife:** Both the reduced trapping/hunting and restoration/increase of riparian habitats have likely caused an increase in beaver numbers and conflicts with farms, primarily drainage issues and flooding of fields.
- 21. Regulations governing agriculture are unknown and/or unclear for some landowners.**