

KING COUNTY AGRICULTURE COMMISSION

MEETING NOTICE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2017

2:30-5:30 P.M.

SNOQUALMIE PUBLIC LIBRARY

PROPOSED MEETING AGENDA

(AGENDA ITEM TIMES ARE TENTATIVE)

2:30	Call to Order <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions• Approval of Agenda• Approval of Minutes (Oct 12)	Leann Krainick, Chair Pro Tem
2:40	New Business - King County's Land Conservation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ag components• Proposed funding• Timeline• Action: Questions, comments	Mike Murphy, King County, DNRP, Land Conservation Program Manager
3:15	Commission Business Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nomination of new commissioners, timeline• Letter re: DNRP and Pearson Eddy sent 10/30/17• Thurston County Agriculture Committee 11/30/17	Patrice Barrentine
3:30	Pearson Eddy Wetland Restoration Project Update	Richard Martin
3:40	Public Comment – <i>please limit comments to 3 minutes/person</i>	
3:50	Break; Review King County Agricultural Land Use Maps	
4:10	Status of Proposed Public Rule on Water Quality Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presentation• Q&A	Cynthia Hickey, KC Stormwater Engineer
4:30	2017 Accomplishments and Planning for 2018 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed Calendar• Proposed Topics	Leann Krainick, Amy Holmes, Patrice Barrentine
5:00	Old Business - Updates (approx. 5 min each) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land Conservation Initiative, Advisory Group• King Conservation District• Farm Bureau• Snoqualmie Watershed Improvement District (WID)• KC Ag Program• Local Food Initiative• Beefing Up Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leann• KCD Staff• Bruce Elliott• WID Staff• Richard Martin• Mike Lufkin• Patrice Barrentine
5:30	Adjourn	Leann Krainick

Next Meeting: January 11

2017 Meeting Topics Calendar

Complete	Topic	Who	When	Outcomes	
				Letter advising County Executive	Notes
✓	Pike Place Market Tour and Farm Programming	Leigh Newman-Bell	Jan		
✓	Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance Sales Report	Chris Curtis	Jan		
✓	King Conservation District Regional Food Grant Program update	Mary Embleton	Jan		
✓	Approval of Ag Commission's FFF Recommendations		Feb		
✓	Road Vacations	King County	Feb		
✓	Code Changes: Agriculture and Ag Use Definitions	Erin Auzins, Randy Sandin	Mar		
✓	Farmland Preservation Program update	Ted Sullivan	Mar		
✓	Commission Accomplishments 2016	Patrice Barrentine	Mar		
✓	Commission approves FFF agreement		Apr	✓	In agreement package
✓	Agriculture Drainage Assistance Program 2016 update	Lou Beck, Ben Axt	Apr		
✓	Local Food Initiative Annual Report 2016	Mike Lufkin	Apr		
✓	Livestock Workshops update	Patrice Barrentine	May		
✓	Commission Policies and Procedures: Review and Modify		May, July		Reviewed and modified; proposal tabled to 2018
✓	Winery Code Amendments		July, Sep	✓	
✓	Pearson Eddy, DNRP, NRCS		Oct	✓	
✓	What's Going on with Ag in Other Counties?	Pierce	Fall		Tabled to 2018
✓	Joint Meeting with Rural Forestry Commission		Nov		Tabled to 2018
	Tours to cover: Purpose of Commission, FPP, ADAP, Buffers, Salmon Recovery, Drip Irrigation, Drought, WID, Reclaimed Water, Keller Ditch, Tall Chief, Ag Regulatory Changes				



King County

Water and Land Resources Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
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201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98104-3855
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**King County Agriculture Commission
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 12th, 2017
Snoqualmie Public Library, Snoqualmie**

Commissioners	P	A	Commissioners	P	A	Commissioners	P	A
Leann Krainick, Chair Pro-Tem	X		Siri Erickson-Brown		X	Larry Pickering	X	
Amy Holmes, Vice Chair Pro-Tem	X		Meredith Molli	X		Bob Vos	X	
Roger Calhoon		X	Eldon Murray	X				
Bruce Elliott	X		Leigh Newman-Bell		X			

P=Present; A=Absent

County Staff Present		
Eric Beach, DNRP	Ben Larson, DNRP	Megan Moore, DNRP
Steve Evans, DNRP	Richard Martin, DNRP	Rick Reinlasoder, DNRP
Councilmember Kathy Lambert	Makie Matsumoto-Hervol, DNRP	Sara Rocero-Barrett, DNRP

Guests Present		
Lisa Allen, farmer	Bob Kusters, farmer	Jason Roetcisoender, farmer/SV WID
Melissa Borsting, SV Tilth	Kolten Kusters, wetland scientist	Sean Stratman, SV Tilth
AJ Crice, farmer	Cynthia Krass, SV WID	Van Strom, farmer
Preston Drew, CAPR	Ward Looney, retiree	Duane Van Ess, farmer
Robert French, retiree	Patrick McClothlin, resident	Steve Van Ess, farmer
Dan T. Griner, resident	Joshua Monaghan, KCD	Emily Webster, KCD
Darrel Johnson, retiree	Robin Morse, sheep breeder	Linda Wilcox, farmer
Tom Jordan, farm worker	Steve Neugebauer, SNR Company	Jeff Wright, CAPR
David K... (?)	Catherine Ortiz	

Meeting Action Summary

- **Pearson Eddy Wetland Restoration Project: Public Comment and Project Update**
- **Commissioner Recruitment Update**
- **King County Council Update**
- **Approval of September 14th, 2017 Meeting Minutes**
- **King County Agricultural Land Use Mapping Project**
- **Farm Fish Flood (FFF) 2.0 Update**
- **Other Updates: Land Conservation Initiative, KCD, Farm Bureau, Sno Valley WID, KC Ag Program**

Meeting Called to Order at 3:03 pm

Introductions

Bob Vos reported the Pierce County Council recently approved a resolution to reinstate the County’s Agriculture Commission. He said the Farm Bureau, who was instrumental in this decision, will be responsible for designating many of the slots. He expressed hope the King and Pierce County Commissions can work together in the future.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Bob Vos motioned to move the Pearson Eddy Project Update to immediately follow the Public Comment period, and move the prior meeting minutes' approval to follow the Pearson Eddy update. Larry Pickering seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Multiple farmers, citizens, and other stakeholders of the northern Snoqualmie River valley near the King/Snohomish county line spoke to the Commission during the comment period. All expressed deep concern about local impacts following Natural Resources' Conservation Service (NRCS)'s planting of a large number of trees in the Snoqualmie River floodplain near Pearson Eddy. Primary focus centered on: damage and safety issues from rising flood levels caused by the trees, non-native status of the planted trees, apparent poor scientific basis for the project, and alleged violations of local/federal law by NRCS. Public consensus favored supporting NRCS in taking action, to address project impacts and protect well-being of affected stakeholders and their lands, by removing the trees. This support includes a proposed draft letter from the Commission to DNRP detailing their resolutions to the project impacts, and a public meeting attended by DNRP to explain their position on these impacts.

Pearson Eddy Wetland Restoration Project Update – Richard Martin

Mr. Martin overviewed the history of NRCS's Pearson Eddy project and the affected lands. He affirmed many public comments about historical vegetation in the area, largely shrubs and cranberry swamp. NRCS's history of projects in the area dates back to 2004, with tree planting phased in since 2007. He noted the presence of a water control structure that controls south-to-north drainage flow and stops water from back-flooding onto private properties when the river is high, as well as a fixed-elevation weir that controls water within the wetland mitigation bank (set at 23 and 27 feet respectively).

Mr. Martin stressed the County has vested interest in preserving agricultural viability of the affected lands as well as helping affected farmers. He said the most immediate problem is that a historical drain tile system on the Van Ess property is now overwhelmed by drainage from multiple flooded properties. In April 2017 NRCS conducted an environmental assessment, which identified several new projects/strategies meant to enhance habitat value of the restoration area. Mr. Martin said this included plans to plant buffers along newly-created ditch areas, and improving pasture areas. Mr. Martin noted the latter could ease or exacerbate a concurrent problem of large numbers of waterfowl consuming vegetation in protein-rich pastures down to soil level. He said this issue needs to be addressed with state and federal jurisdictions.

Following the assessment, DNRP continued talks with NRCS, who held a stance that since the projects were conducted on private property, they had no responsibility to address unintended consequences. NRCS has, as a result of these discussions, now conceded to address impacts of the projects. King County has also offered to assist NRCS in redoing their earlier environmental modeling. The County believes the earlier modeling, which predicted a total five-inch flood rise from the tree plantings as well as other proposed projects, to be based on incomplete data. In an August 2017 letter to NRCS, DNRP identified several strategies to mitigate impacts of current and proposed projects. Among these strategies were removing at least some of the planted trees, and getting existing drainage tile systems back in operation. Mr. Martin said NRCS is considering implementation of many, if not all, of these strategies within the next couple of years. He also said the County is committed to finding both short- and long-term solutions to concerns, and is considering its ultimate course of action based on concrete scientific data.

Several public commenters continued to express frustrations about project impacts on their lands, apparent inaction in resolving the impacts, and worry about the coming flood season. Mr. Martin encouraged public pressure on this issue, and replied to one questioner that he believes the chances of a major tree removal in the coming year are high.

Bob Vos voiced concerns about a second, shortened version of the detailed draft letter he crafted with Pearson Eddy stakeholders. He said the revised draft, which he claimed no input on, was not substantial enough to serve as a basis for dialogue with NRCS and DNRP, and suggested the more detailed letter for this purpose. He also requested "clarity" from DNRP, whom he stated has delivered mixed messages in committing to help NRCS uphold a voiced willingness to remove a portion of the trees and revegetate that area. Mr. Martin replied that DNRP is committed to working with NRCS to identify best options, including tree removal, but that he could not yet commit to a specific option without further concrete data. He said that, particularly in light of the recent Farm Fish Flood (FFF) agreement, impacts to fish habitat, as well as farming and flooding, still have to be considered.

Mr. Vos suggested, in addition to a detailed letter, convening a public meeting attended by DNRP to allow community input to be incorporated into this letter. King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert said she could assist in convening

such a meeting. Larry Pickering motioned for the Commission to send Mr. Vos's draft of the Pearson Eddy letter to DNRP and NRCS, and have Councilmember Lambert's office work with DNRP to convene a public meeting. Bruce Elliott seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

BREAK

Commissioner Recruitment Update – Leann Krainick

Ms. Krainick reported that paperwork for the suggested nominees for eight current and pending Commission vacancies has been forwarded to DNRP Director Christie True's office. The nominees will be transmitted to the County Executive's office in October, and he is expected to formally appoint the nominees in December. At that point KCC will have 30 days to confirm the appointments. She added that King Conservation District and Seattle-King County Public Health have expressed a desire to utilize their ex officio (non-voting) positions on the Commission.

King County Council Update – Councilmember Kathy Lambert

Councilmember Lambert briefly spoke on two items. The first, the County's "Million Trees" initiative, has prompted her concern about planting of cottonwoods and a handful of other tree species in areas where she believes they could be harmful. The second item is proposed by the Executive for the next election ballot, requesting \$1.8 billion more in land acquisitions by King County. Ms. Lambert said she does not support this.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Eldon Murray stated his concern with the minutes' interpretation of the original motion for the Pearson Eddy letter drafted by Bob Vos and local stakeholders. Amy Holmes motioned to approve the minutes as written. Meredith Molli seconded the motion. The motion carried, with opposition by Mr. Murray and abstention by Mr. Vos.

King County Agricultural Land Use Mapping Project – Ben Larson, Makie Matsumoto-Hervol, Sara Rocero-Barrett, Rick Reinlasoder

Mr. Reinlasoder introduced Mr. Larson, Ms. Matsumoto-Hervol, and Ms. Rocero-Barrett, a team of farmland data mapping specialists hired by the County. Mr. Larson briefly overviewed the main goal of their project, to assess agriculture land use and infrastructure in King County. This will aid the County in updating existing agricultural land use maps, and identifying "farmable" unfarmed land, including land for the Working Farmland Partnership. He said this will also help reach some goals of the County's Local Food Initiative.

Ms. Matsumoto-Hervol overviewed the team's methods. They surveyed primarily the five APDs – Snoqualmie, Sammamish, Lower Green, Upper Green, and Enumclaw – and surrounding rural, urban, and suburban areas. This involved extensive field surveying, often from public roads, then reviewing that work in the office with aerial imagery and senior agriculture program staff consultation. They attempted to define the primary use for parcels, including for those designated as multi-use. She noted the team was unable to measure any parcels less than one-half acre in size with one contiguous land use.

She said that the farm infrastructure surveying outside APDs was not quite as extensive as the surveying done in the APDs, and the main focus of lands they surveyed outside the APDs was farmed and "farmable but unfarmed" lands. Ms. Rocero-Barrett explained that "farmed" meant evidence of agricultural land in production, while "farmable but unfarmed" meant land that appeared suitable for farming but had no evidence of being recently used for such purpose. "Unfarmable" land was defined as land unlikely to be farmed, such as sports facilities and wetlands.

Mr. Larson said the results presented today represent a draft. He explained that land inside APDs has been fully surveyed, and about 2/3 of surveying outside of APDs is done and expected to be completed by end of November. Ms. Matsumoto-Hervol and Ms. Rocero-Barrett then reviewed findings in the APDs. These were divided into percentages of farmed, unfarmable, and farmable but unfarmed land, with the farmed land broken down into food-producing vs. non-food-producing. Mr. Larson said slightly over half of all APD land is actively farmed, the vast majority of farming is food-producing, and that unfarmable land outside APDs was not mapped. Farmable land outside APDs is mostly farmed, and the majority of farming located outside APDs is non-food-producing. Ms. Rocero-Barrett then spoke on infrastructure findings and the diversity of land uses and animal species identified in the lands surveyed. She concluded by thanking the County, Commission, landowners, and others for the opportunity to participate in this project.

Due to time constraints, Ms. Krainick requested the team return at the next Commission meeting, to allow time for Commissioners and others present to review their updated APD land use maps and data and ask questions.

New Business: Farm Fish Flood (FFF) 2.0 Update – Richard Martin

Richard Martin reported that in June, DNRP transmitted the signed agreement identifying prioritized action items and task forces for the three FFF caucuses over the next three years. He said the most pressing issue is identifying organizations and individuals to participate in the caucus groups. Five from each caucus will serve on the implementation committee, with Meredith Molli serving as Commission representative for that committee. Mr. Martin requested final confirmation of Commission representatives for the other task forces, stating the goal is to convene the first implementation committee meeting before Thanksgiving and the task forces meetings in January. He said Bob Vos and Bruce Elliott had been suggested to serve on the regulatory and buffers task forces, respectively. Mr. Vos and Mr. Elliott confirmed a willingness to serve in this capacity; no other Commissioners have requested consideration.

Ms. Molli motioned to nominate Mr. Vos as Commission representative on the regulatory task force and Mr. Elliott as Commission representative for the buffers task force. Eldon Murray seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Mr. Martin added that there has been a delay in nominations for the strategic planning task force, in the event an incoming Snoqualmie area Commissioner has an interest in serving. Mr. Martin also added, in reply to a question from Mr. Vos, that outreach is being done to partner organizations, including Farm Bureau, Snoqualmie Valley WID, and Snoqualmie Valley Tilth, to gauge their interest in participating on the implementation committee.

Old Business: Updates – Commissioners, County/Organization Staff

- **Land Conservation Initiative Advisory Group (Leann Krainick):** Ms. Krainick reported the times and locations of three public LCIAG meetings – October 19th at Mercer Island Community Center, November 2nd at King Street Center, and November 16th at Tukwila Community Center, all from 4:30 – 7:00 pm.
- **King Conservation District (Josh Monaghan):** Mr. Monaghan reported KCD's drainage program maintained three miles of ditches this year, which he believes to be a record. Major work is also being done assisting dairies to ensure smooth recordkeeping for state inspections. The Regional Food Systems grant program should announce their 2017 grants next Commission meeting. He also advised that several pieces of farm equipment are still available for loan: a no-till drill, a drop-spreader for lime, a manure spreader, and a small-scale poultry processing unit. He said KCD has a half-million dollars to invest in improving future drainage work. KCD is also conducting a study on the science behind buffers, including their width and how they might help farmers. He reported on several new staff additions, and that KCD is seeking a candidate for their now-vacant agriculture drainage program coordinator position.
- **Farm Bureau (Bruce Elliott):** Mr. Elliott corrected his prior statement about the Bureau's annual banquet. It is scheduled for October 22nd at 5:00 pm at Emerald Downs, with no cost to voting members.
- **Snoqualmie Valley WID (Cynthia Krass):** Ms. Krass reported the WID's water rights bank is open from October 15th to December 1, accepting applications for one year to five years.
- **King County Agriculture Program (Richard Martin):** Mr. Martin spoke about remaining funds from a \$50 million bond passed in 1979 to support the Farmland Preservation Program (FPP). He stated the money was initially allocated to several funds dedicated to different areas, and the County wishes to consolidate the \$900K remaining into one county-wide farmland preservation acquisition fund. He said a formal Commission recommendation is required to make this happen. Bob Vos asked if this would still allow the County to make fee title purchases of land, which he does not support. Mr. Martin replied that, while the County is honoring the wish that the Commission advise the County prior to potential fee farmland purchases, such acquisitions are still theoretically possible, as no existing guidelines would be changed. Amy Holmes made a motion to accept Mr. Martin's recommendation, seconded by Larry Pickering. Ms. Krainick supported, Mr. Vos abstained, Eldon Murray opposed, and Mr. Elliott was not present to vote. The motion carried 4-1-1.

Review of 2017 Proposed Meeting Topics – Leann Krainick

Ms. Krainick said the joint meeting with the Rural Forest Commission is being pushed to 2018, as she and Amy Holmes need time to confer with the RFC to work out what the two Commissions can constructively do together.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:52 pm

Next Meeting

November 9th, 2017, 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm, at Snoqualmie Public Library, Snoqualmie



King County
Agriculture Commission
Water and Land Resources Division
Department of Natural Resources and Parks

King Street Center
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 600
Seattle, WA 98104-3855
206.477-4800

October 27, 2017

Ms. Christie True, Director
King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
King Street Center
201 South Jackson Street, Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98104-3855

Re: Pearson Eddy and DNRP

Dear Director True:

At the 14 Sept 2017 Ag Commission meeting, public comments were made by Duane and Steve Van Ess on impacts to their farms caused by nearby NRCS projects in the Snoqualmie Valley. These issues have been longstanding and deal with farmer livelihood, future success of agriculture, and flooding concerns by the residents of Snoqualmie Valley. This letter is a result of the motion made and passed by the Commission to send a letter to DNRP requesting both DNRP and NRCS actions. Commissioner Bob Vos was to serve as a focal point for the letter, coordinating with both farmers and Commission staff personnel. The Commission very much appreciates past actions DNRP has taken to address some of these issues. However, we also realize that DNRP has many things on its plate, that many items have not yet been done, and so there are critical actions yet to be undertaken.

We know that in addition to supporting agriculture, DNRP has specific interests in 1) protecting their investment in FPP, and 2) preserving the zero-rise flood policy to maintain "flood safety" (for both people and property). These are key concerns of the Ag Commission also. We request that DNRP directly undertake the following actions.

1. We understand that NRCS is willing to consider removing much of their large tree plantings (these plantings are raising increasing negative concerns by farmers and other valley residents, as well as by DNRP to protect their specific interests) and replace them with more historical and natural foliage. But they are looking to DNRP for guidance. We believe that such replacement could be a win-win for all parties involved (see rationale given below under NRCS requests), and we ask that DNRP encourage NRCS in that action.
2. A critical issue is replacement of the pump at Pearson Eddy, which according to NRCS staff (in an 11 February 2016 Snohomish Valley Drainage Report) was removed by Walt De Jong sometime after 2009 when several NRCS easements and projects had occurred. Obviously the pump had been effective because it was operated and maintained for many years under a joint agreement among several landowners (an initial pump in the 1940s and the more recent

pump beginning in 1984). Apparently there was no discussion about pump removal among the landowners, and the disappearance was not reported to authorities as a theft. We understand that now, although DNRP is willing to request NRCS to replace the pump, some at DNRP may believe a replacement pump would have limited effectiveness. We need immediate discussion to determine pump effectiveness for drainage and flood/backflow storage, including possible effects of the upstream MB (Mitigation Bank) and its 27' elevation weir, so that appropriate actions can be undertaken. One possibility is for DNRP to install a pump, evaluate its effectiveness, and work with NRCS to make any necessary changes.

3. In a community meeting on 15 July 2015 at the Steve Van Ess farm (involving valley residents, NRCS, King County representatives, Ag interests, an aide for U.S. Representative Del Bene, and others), a number of issues were addressed and questions were posed to NRCS. One question by a staff member of DNRP was whether NRCS needed to determine the capacity of the pump in order to replace it. He noted that getting the pump put in before the rainy season was time critical. NRCS responded they did need that information, and so he agreed to do some research to help them determine the size. Please inform us as to whether that research has been done and passed on to NRCS, whether there has been follow-up, and whether there were difficulties encountered in determining the size, so that appropriate actions can be taken.
4. We ask that DNRP work with NRCS and FSA to establish a dollar value on crop losses due to related government actions, and that the Vaness' and owners of other affected land that is actively farmed be compensated appropriately.

We also ask DNRP to write a letter and do appropriate follow-up with NRCS, requesting that NRCS take the following actions. We note that DNRP, in a 30 August 2017 letter to NRCS commenting on a FONSI (Finding of Non Significance) related to the now ongoing construction at Pearson Eddy, did not address many of these issues.

1. Explain why in the current Pearson Eddy project, the new 60" MTR (Muted Tide Regulatory) pipe/gate, is lower than the old 48" pump outflow pipe which it replaces. The bottom of the MTR pipe is at elevation 23', and the bottom of the three gated pipes is at 20'. Please also inform us of the exact elevation of the old pump outflow pipe. We do not necessarily have an objection to the elevation change, but having the old elevation defined would help communication and understanding. Also, NRCS has said the new MTR will "mirror the current operation" of Pearson Eddy. This does not seem to us to be the case, and we would like an explanation/justification for that assertion.
2. Between Pearson Eddy and the Snoqualmie River, the bottom of the channel rises 3' (from elevation 20 to 23) due to accumulated sediment. In a 15 December 2016 meeting at Qualco Meeting Hall, NRCS said it was "working that problem." What has been done as a result? It seems appropriate to us to clean out that sediment to restore the channel flow to its original condition.
3. In a 9 Nov 2010 joint letter to NRCS from the King and Snohomish County Ag Boards, a number of serious concerns were expressed about future impacts of the recently completed 170-acre tree plantings on the FPE (Flood Plain Easement) just north of the county line and the Steve Van Ess farm. A number of NRCS actions were requested, including meetings to further discuss the issues. We call that to your attention because

NRCS has stated several times that it takes landowner concerns seriously, and many of the predicted impacts have now come to pass. Please reaffirm your commitment to addressing these impacts. One issue is to make sure that the reverse flow caused (N to S instead of natural S to N) from the NRCS FPE area onto the Van Ess farm, will be corrected as promised at the 15 July 2015 community meeting. We believe you have committed to monitor and stop this change via several actions: a) consider a re-vegetation plan (replacing the NRCS-planted cottonwoods and other trees with more native and optimal vegetation); b) locate, fix and maintain the drain tiles and other drainage features; and c) implement a beaver management program. The commitment was to start this effort before winter 2015, but none of this has yet been done two years later. When will these actions start?

4. As part of item (3), at the July 2015 meeting NRCS agreed to contact the FPE land owner to help accomplish this, but also to be responsible itself for the work if the owner defaults. Has that contact and follow-up occurred?
5. In the flood study commissioned by NRCS (summer of 2017), it was projected that the NRCS tree plantings would generate a 5" increase in flood level within the valley. In the August 2017 Final Environmental Assessment for the Pearson Eddy project, page 23, there was a commitment to "consider re-vegetation" of 74 + 20 acres of NRCS approved tree plantings, in order to reduce the flood rise impact to the King County "zero rise" standard. It would be helpful to know how these acreage numbers were arrived at. We encourage you to follow through on implementing this option so that very damaging flood level increases (even if further studies show to be less than 5") in the valley can be avoided.
6. In any case, for tree removal in the FPE, we believe it is especially critical that open setbacks of trees be maintained for each "drain" (drainage ditch and tile system). We ask that at least 50' on each side of each system remain open to prevent damage from tree roots and beavers to these drainage ways.
7. NRCS agreed to provide several items of information to the concerned stakeholders, which have not yet been provided: a) Since NRCS stated that it purchases easements on such FPE land to "help farmers in cases where the land is not farmable" we believe it would help future communication and avoid mistakenly taking valuable farmland out of production, to know how NRCS determines that property is not farmable. Simply a statement from the landowner, who has a conflict of interest in gaining an easement payment, is obviously not adequate. In the case of this FPE, local farmers have evidence that they participated in productively farming the land.
8. As discussed in items (5) and (6) above, the NRCS tree plantings are a huge issue. It is now generally agreed, from multiple historical document sources, that in the 1800s this FPE property was overgrown with "scrub shrubs and wild cranberries" rather than anything similar to the cottonwoods which have been planted. At the 15 July 2015 meeting NRCS agreed to explain how the decision to plant cottonwoods was arrived at, and how that would promote floodplain restoration (reduce flooding). That information has not been provided. We believe that several win-win results may be provided for all interested parties by replacing the current cottonwoods by the natural scrub-shrub and cranberry historical growth:

- a. Mature cottonwoods have a large vertical and horizontal profile, and in addition tend to drop many branches to the ground, thus resulting in significant flood level increases.
- b. Total foliage, with resultant shade and insect fish-forage populations, may be equal or more with the historical native growth, because it tends to be dependent on total available sunlight area.
- c. Woody debris, which may be valuable for river and riparian areas, can more effectively be provided by large trees more adjacent to the river; woody debris from these cottonwoods will tend to be deposited instead over a wide swath of downstream agricultural land and other property, leading to significant and repeated cleanup costs.
- d. The more natural growth would result in decreased beaver populations, which block drainage ways and spread to adjacent areas; decreased tree roots would have similar positive effects.

A common understanding and policy on this issue would also give some direction as to how future situations should be handled.

9. NRCS committed to installing a fish barrier in the Pearson Eddy project. It felt this would protect the fish from accessing areas detrimental to them, and it would also avoid farmers having to deal with new fish impact issues. How is this barrier being implemented?
10. We request that you work with us and the affected farmers to come up with a joint operating plan for the Pearson Eddy pump and the MTR. This should be consistent with the longstanding agreement for previous pump operation, considering the needs of all parties and fairly sharing the pump operation and maintenance costs. In light of the long-standing joint operation among the affected landowners, but NRCS and the current landowners having various agricultural/conservation/fish interests, it seems that future operation could best be done by a neutral and impartial party (e.g. the Snoqualmie WID).
11. Please provide us with an explanation of how NRCS defines "floodplain" versus "floodway." These terms are important for communication and for maintaining consistency with regulatory requirements, and that answer was committed to in a 2015 meeting.
12. Finally, a very significant impact of the previously accomplished conservation efforts by NRCS is the waterfowl which have been attracted to the neighboring farmlands. The birds destroy much of the pasture/hay crop through their foraging activities. Waterfowl experts should be consulted to devise ways of mitigating their adverse effects.

The Ag Commission realizes that some of the above requests are based on assertions regarding past history or current conditions. Based on conversations with the involved farmers, we believe these farmers have, and can provide if necessary, the data to verify these assertions.

We request that DNRP work with the Commission, affected farmers and the other appropriate government agencies in implementing the above actions, and that it keeps the Ag Commission informed of progress. Again, we thank you for your past efforts, and look forward to cooperatively participating with you on these things.

Leann Krainick

Christie True, Director DNRP

October 27, 2017

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Leann Kranick, Chair

King County Agriculture Commission

Cc: Councilmember Kathy Lambert