

SUMMARY NOTES

SNOHOMISH SUSTAINABLE LANDS STRATEGY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING 3.3.5 -- PHASE 3 2015

Wednesday, June 17, 2015 1:00 – 3:00pm, Snohomish County Conf Rm 6A02

PURPOSE OF JUNE SLS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: Conduct monthly Executive Committee business, including reports from the County Ag Coordinator and Snohomish Conservation District. The primary presentation and discussion will be the work of PCC Farmland Trust, including their approach to prioritizing farmland for protection in Pierce County, possible options for a similar exercise in Snohomish County. Other items include a discussion of NOAA grant opportunities and strategic vision for floodplains.

PARTICIPANTS:

Executive Committee Members: Brian Bookey (poultry/egg farmer, National Food CEO), CK Eidem (Ducks Unlimited), Kristin Kelly (FutureWise, Pilchuck Audubon), Tristan Klesick (family farmer), Monte Marti (Snohomish Conservation Dist Manager), Terry Williams (Tulalip Tribes), Shawn Yanity (Stillaguamish Tribal Chair)

Conveners, Support Team, Other Participants: Hilary Aten, Melissa Campbell, Robert (PCC Farmland Trust); Pat Stevenson (Stillaguamish Tribe); Heather Cole (Puget Sound Partnership); Alison Bridges (SnoCo PDS); Chuck Hazleton (Stillaguamish Flood Control District); John Giunotte (Marine Conservation Inst – marine bio-geographer); Gregg Farris (SnoCo SWM Dir.); Linda Neunzig (SnoCo Ag Coordinator, sheep farmer); Erik Stockdale (Ecology, Regional Wetlands Manager); Jason Lehto (NOAA Restoration Center); Nick Green, Danielle (Evans School of Public Policy; SnoCo interns); Dewelle Ellsworth (interested citizen); Beth LeDoux (King County; Snohomish Basin Technical Group co-chair); SLS co-coordinators Cynthia Carlstad and Dan Evans.

1) WELCOME, INTRODUCTION (1:00 – 1:10)

- a) **Review purpose, agenda:** Noting the agenda Executive Committee (EC) had a number of significant items, the co-coordinators reminded the group that they would be managing time to stay on schedule. The principal presentation was the PCC Farmland Trust's review of their computerized prioritization tool, how it was used in Pierce County, and how it might be applied in Snohomish County, building on the data layers in the SnoCo / SLS Integrated Information System / GIS.
- b) **Introductions:** In addition to self introductions by participants, Hilary Aten and Melissa Campbell were introduced as presenters for the PCC Farmland Trust agenda item. Also new to the SLS table was marine bio-geographer, Dr. John Guinotte, who has been working with the Tulalip Tribes and TNC to provide precision LIDAR elevations in the Snohomish estuary.

2) BRIEF UPDATES FROM SLS PARTICIPANTS (1:10-1:30)

- a) **Ag coordinator report** (Linda Neunzig): Linda Neunzig introduced SnoCo graduate interns Nick Green and Danielle (from UW's Evans School of Public

Policy), who are working on the Ag Enterprise Zone (AEZ) at Tulalip. Nick has extensive management consulting experience (with Booz Allen, a major national consulting firm) and will be developing an AEZ concept paper for consideration by the Tulalip Tribal leadership and AEZ participants.

Linda also reported that a new Focus on Forestry would be added to the annual Focus on Farming, which has been attracting several hundred farmers and folks interested in agriculture from around the region for several years.

b) Other updates and reports:

- i) EC members Kristin Kelly and Tristan Klesick reported on the County Council's recent action to modify certain requirements of the County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program. Some supporters of the TDR program, which is designed to offer developers higher density in urban area construction projects in exchange for payments to protect farmland and open space in surrounding rural areas, view the move as a setback. There was broad interest around the SLS table for supporting a robust TDR program.
- ii) EC member Terry Williams noted that there will be a meeting with Tulalip Tribal Chair Mel Sheldon and members of the Tribal Board to review the AEZ proposal, and support for SLS.
- iii) 2015 work plan: the co-coordinators (Dan and Cynthia) reported that there would not be time in the agenda at this EC meeting to discuss the 2015 work plan, but that it would be added to the July or August EC agenda. An overview of the SLS Work Plan will be circulated before the EC meeting.

3) PCC FARMLAND TRUST PRESENTATION (1:30-2:15)

- a) **Overview:** PCC Farmland Trust, in coordination with other regional land trusts such as Forterra and the Trust for Public Land (TPS), is seeking to protect farmland and open space using Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) and TDR. PDR funds can come from USDA's NRCS, Washington State's RCO, county Conservation Futures, and local or regional initiatives, such as Skagit County's farmland preservation bond. In order to focus such funding on the highest value lands for protection, PCC FT has developed a computerized prioritization tool. The tool has been tested and applied successfully in Pierce County and is ready for application in other areas, such as Snohomish County. The prioritization tool can incorporate data and map / GIS based information from a multitude of sources, and the criteria for prioritization can be customized. Once the data is supplied and the criteria adjusted, the model can be built for a relatively modest sum of money.
- b) **Prioritization tool and process:** The prioritization tool is set up to:
 - i) formalize collaboration
 - ii) develop a ten-year protection plan
 - iii) outline a funding strategy

The tool emphasizes conservation planning with a GIS platform, which makes technical data available to planners and is also accessible to

landowners and policy-level participants. Once the data sets are compiled, “qualifying baseline criteria” are applied for initial screening, including:

- Prime farmland soils
- Exclusions (e.g., developed areas)
- > 5 acres
- Contiguous farmlands

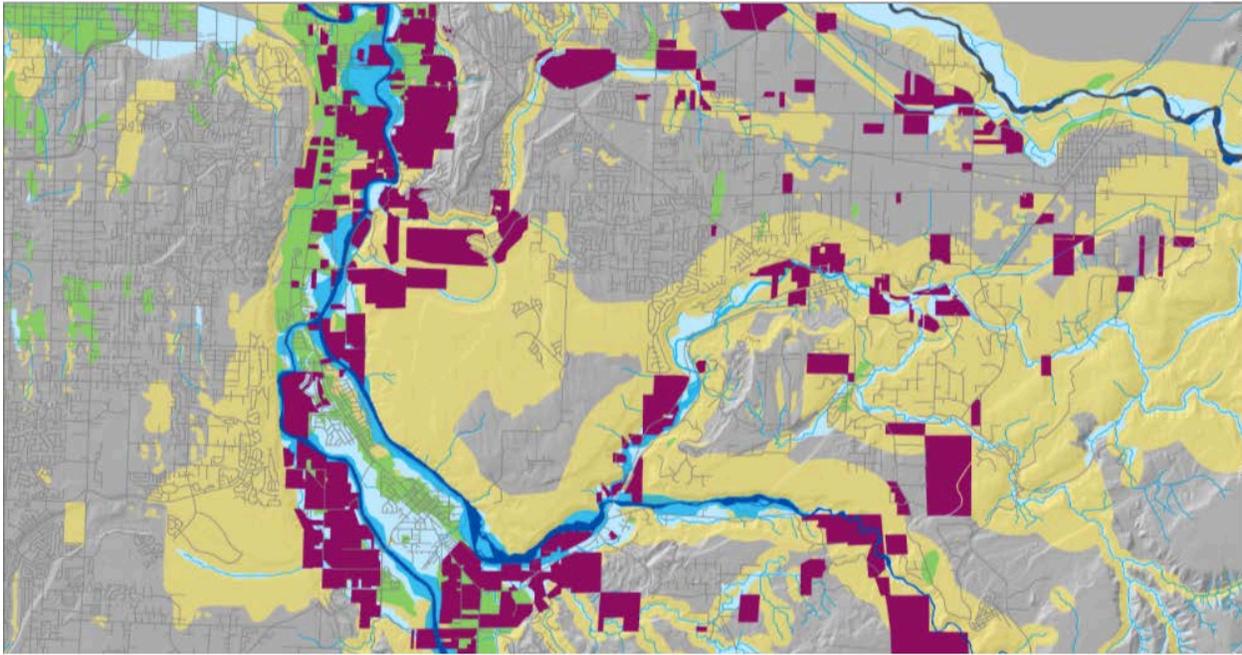
Specific criteria for prioritization should include:

- Size of parcel
- Soils
- Adjacency
- Current use
- Zoning
- Located near / adjacent to Scenic Highway
- Proximity to UGA (Urban Growth Area)

Participation of key stakeholders and buy-in is critical to the success of the process; which ultimately comes down to a parcel-by-parcel summary of protection priorities displayed on a GIS map.

- c) **Example of mapping results in Pierce County:** In Pierce County, the PCC FT worked primarily with the Pierce County Ag Roundtable and developed three over-arching goals for the initiative: 1) protect farmland; 2) build capacity; and 3) educate the public. After agreeing on broadly supported criteria for participation, and developing the prioritization model, the project team identified 6000 acres of top tier farmland protection priorities, 4500 acres in the Puyallup River Valley. With climate change – increasing flood frequency, sea rise in tidally influenced areas, and less snowpack to sustain late season river flows – upland farmlands will become increasingly important.

The map below, developed for PCC FT by Flo Analytics, highlights (in magenta) farmland protection priorities in Pierce County.



Farmland Protection Priorities in Pierce County developed by PCC Farmland Trust

- d) Discussion – possible use in Snohomish County: There was broad interest in applying the PCC FT prioritization tool in Snohomish County, which has developed an extensive Farm-Fish-Flood Control Integrated Information System / GIS. This data and GIS information could be loaded into the prioritization tool, along with customized criteria, at a relatively modest cost: approximately \$12,000, half of which could be provided by a grant through the PCC Farmland Trust. Additional funding would be required to develop the criteria through a collaborative process and to refine and update the data base. One source of the funding might be the Terry Husseman Account at Ecology. SnoCo Ag Coordinator Linda Neunzig and Monte Marti and his team at the Snohomish Conservation District will develop a strategy for scoping the project, developing a budget, and identifying funding.

4) NOAA COASTAL ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCY GRANTS (2:15 – 2:35)

- a) **Overview: Two separate grant programs** are offered by NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) as a fast follow on to the President's recently announced interagency Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative. <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/3CD69AE6209812EB85257E2E00527EE>

The Snohomish estuary and surrounding areas were selected as one of four Resilient Lands and Water priority areas nationwide that are demonstrating coordinated, multi-benefit (e.g., fish-farm-flood control) approaches to addressing climate related impacts. Both grant programs require a one-third non-federal match, which can include in-kind contributions.

- i) **NMFS (National Marine Fisheries Service) Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program** implementation focused grant (range of grant amount \$200k - \$2 million; expected average grant: \$500,000); application deadline July 2, 2015:

- ii) **NOS (National Oceans Service) Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program 2015:** planning and implementation focused (range of grant amount \$500k - \$1 million; 10 grants expected); application deadline July 24, 2015:

<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=276661>

- b) **SLS response and coordination needs:** Noting that fish-farm-flood coordination by the Snohomish County-based SLS, regional Floodplains by Design, and the Washington State Coordinated Investment initiatives was instrumental in the selection of the Snohomish basin designation as one of the four priority areas under the interagency Resilient Lands and Waters Initiative, application for the NMFS implementation / construction focused grant and the NOS planning focused grant is a high priority. The EC, with guidance from NOAA Restoration Center's Jason Letho, discussed the two grants and the effort to coordinate applications:

NMFS Resiliency Implementation Grant: This grant through the NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is focused on implementation (i.e., construction of resilience projects within the next year. NOAA has developed the Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program to build resilience of coastal ecosystems and communities in the U.S. The Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency awards will fund projects that develop healthy and sustainable coastal ecosystems through habitat restoration and conservation.

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Restore habitat to support healthy fish populations and provide ecosystem functions that reduce hazards and risks associated with extreme weather events and a changing climate;
- Provide sustainable and lasting ecological benefits and resiliency to extreme weather events, a changing climate, and allow for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts;
- Implement on-the-ground restoration actions that result in immediate beneficial impacts;
- Demonstrate collaboration among multiple stakeholders;
- Receive approval from the state governor; and
- Result in socioeconomic benefits associated with restoration of healthy and resilient coastal ecosystems.

This grant program was developed to complement the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants program, which focuses on the development of safe and productive coastal communities through the development of policies, incentives, regulations, standards, and other tools and strategies.

Jay Krienitz of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is coordinating an application that will involve several projects in the Snohomish estuary and nearshore area, including Mid-Spencer Island and likely Smith Island

components. As noted, this grant program is a fast follow on to the Resilience Initiative's launch, with a July 2nd application deadline, and requires a one-third non-federal match. Jay Krienitz has been working with other participants to meet this rapidly-approaching deadline.

NOS Resilience Planning Grant: According to NOAA, the Regional Coastal Resilience Grant program will support regional approaches to undertake activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions. It will support planning or implementing actions that mitigate the impacts of environmental drivers on overall resilience, including economic and environmental resilience. Funded projects will result in improved information for decision makers and actions that reduce risk, accelerate recovery, and promote adaptation to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions.

Awards will be made to organizations that advance resilience strategies in plans for land and ocean use, disaster preparedness, environmental restoration, hazard mitigation, or other regional, state, or community plans. Successful proposals will demonstrate regional coordination among project stakeholders, leverage resources (such as funds, programs, partnerships, and others), and result in economic and environmental benefits for coastal communities. Project results will be evaluated using clear measures of success.

- Proposals are due by July 24, 2015.
- Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, regional organizations, private (for profit) entities, and local, state, and tribal governments.
- Award amounts will range from \$500,000 to \$1 million for projects lasting up to 36 months. Cost sharing through cash or in-kind matches is expected.
- Applicants must conduct projects benefiting coastal communities in one or more of the 35 U.S. coastal states or territories.

After a briefing on the grant opportunity, the EC reviewed a discussion draft outline of grant application elements (appended below as Appendix 1) and encouraged further work on the application by the participants – Sno. Conservation Dist (lead), SnoCo (SWM), Tulalip Tribes, SLS, and TNC (role TBD).

5) MAJOR RIVER REACH STRATEGIC VISION REQUEST – FLOODPLAINS BY DESIGN (2:35-2:50)

The Executive Committee has been briefed in previous EC sessions by Jim Kramer on Floodplains by Design's 10-year Vision for Floodplains Management in Puget Sound. The Floodplains by Design Management Team (The Nature Conservancy, Department of Ecology and Puget Sound Partnership) is requesting groups in each of the major river floodplains create a relatively short and compelling description of their community hopes and strategies. It is assumed that detailed information exists in other planning documents can be used to create the floodplain description. FbD suggests using the questions and quantitative information in a metrics table to convey what is most

important and interesting at a high level. This information will be used as regional efforts seek more resources and by Ecology as background information during the Floodplains by Design grant review process. Submissions from basins in the Puget Sound area should be into FbD during September.

- a) Coordinated response – Several entities in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish Basins are coordinating a response to the FbD request, including: SLS, Snohomish Forum, Stillaguamish Watershed Council (and their respective Technical Teams), Local Integrating Organization (LIO), Snohomish Conservation District, Sno. Co. Ag Board, and Marine Resources Committees (MRC)s.
- b) An outline of the 10-year Floodplains by Design Vision response will be discussed at the July or August SLS EC meeting.

6) COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, NEXT STEPS (2:50 - 3:00 – adjourn)

- a) Standing meeting date/time for EC meetings – third Wednesdays at 1:00, alternating venue between Tulalip Tribes and Snohomish County.

7) PARTICIPANT FOLLOW UP DISCUSSIONS (3:00 – 3:30)

APPENDIX 1

DISCUSSION DRAFT NOAA / NOS PLANNING GRANT PROPOSAL LOWER SNOHOMISH RIVER June 17, 2015

PURPOSE: Demonstrate major river reach-scale, multi-benefit (“net gain” for fish, farms, flood control “F3”) resource management model in the Lower Snohomish River area that builds resilience for the ecosystem, community and economy.

SPONSORS: Snohomish Conservation District (lead); Tulalip Tribes; Snohomish County (SWM); SLS (with fed/st/local agency and stakeholder reps); TNC (coordination TBD)

OBJECTIVES:

Specific objectives for the grant include:

1. Develop integrated information / decision support tools that enable analysis of how climate hazards and changing ocean conditions may affect the Lower Snohomish Reach.
2. Establish a structure for connecting key agencies, F3 stakeholders, and providing technical assistance to mitigate the impacts of climate-related risks. (TDI and MAP team role in this)
3. Develop educational tools for raising awareness and understanding in the local community about climate and extreme weather impacts.
4. Build broadly-supported solution strategies for climate-driven impacts that are aligned with SLS “net gain” philosophy.
5. Identify candidates and high priority elements for multi-benefit action packages that implement solution strategies. (TDI and MAP team approach)
6. Develop monitoring and evaluation measures and strategies to enable adaptive planning
7. Document and share the reach-scale climate resiliency model for possible application in other areas

WORK ELEMENTS

1. Develop data and information pertaining to agricultural lands, food production, and high resolution elevation mapping as knowledge platform for analyzing and evaluating impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards and changing ocean conditions.
2. Integrate geographic, environmental, and socioeconomic information utilizing existing models, data, and decision support tools (e.g. TNC GIS decision support tool, snow caps to white caps hydrologic model, hydrologic/geomorphic

assessment, chinook salmon recovery data and plan priorities, agricultural lands inventory) and new information developed under item #1.

3. Identify key threats to community and ecological assets and values from extreme weather events and climate hazards (e.g. sea level rise, changing river hydrology, invasive plants, animals, bacterial/fungal)
4. Develop system-based solution strategies that incorporate natural defenses and hard structural solutions; vet through local and regional stakeholders. Evaluate costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of various strategies.
5. Identify and begin development of site-specific or topic-specific actions that implement the strategies developed under item #4.
6. Identify monitoring needs and adaptive planning approaches to enable nimble course corrections to secure resiliency as new information emerges.
7. Engage a broad base of local and regional community through visual mapping tools, community forums, stakeholder advisory and working groups
8. Engage and support the differing governmental structures and jurisdictional regulations of Sustainable Lands Strategy participants to enable testing of creative resiliency-building strategies.
9. Engage and coordinate with regional and national coastal climate resiliency innovators and practitioners to extend the learning and development of guidelines, standards and strategies beyond the Lower Snohomish Reach project area.