

Meeting Summary

Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee

WDFW Office, Mill Creek

9:00 am – 12:00 pm, May 7, 2019

In attendance:

1. Alexa Ramos, Snohomish County
2. Beth leDoux, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum/King County
3. Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
4. Mike Rustay, Snohomish County
5. Kevin Lee, WDFW
6. Kirk Lakey, WDFW
7. Lindsey Desmul, WDFW
8. Loren Brokaw, WDFW
9. Tish, Conway-Cranos, WDFW
10. Jenni Whitney, WDFW
11. Colin Wahl, Tulalip Tribes
12. Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District
13. Andrew McDonnell, Snohomish PUD
14. Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
15. Denise Krownbell, Seattle City Light
16. Jason Hall, Cramer Fish Sciences
17. Dave Beedle, Seattle City Light
18. Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County
19. Morgan Ruff, Tulalip Tribes
20. Ashley Caldwell, Tulalip Tribes

Meeting Summary:

Introductions

Mike opened the meeting with introductions and then reviewed the agenda.

Business

Updates – Basin, Regional, State

Budget: The budget was approved on time. PSAR can fund 3 projects off of the large cap. list so the program has seen a small increase in funding level. Floodplains by Design received a small increase too. One project that is being funded focuses on implementing the SLS reach plans through an Integration Team. The Fish Barrier Removal Board saw a significant increase in funding. Tulalip will be receiving some funds for the Lochsloy project planning and design phase. Morgan will send out a budget briefing summary.

Tish mentioned that WDFW will be receiving some ESRP funds to plan for Ebey Island and compile research on tidal barriers into a database to create a spatial map product. There is also a NWFSC and Long Live the Kings study looking at smolt rates in relation to estuary restoration, density dependence and habitat limitations, and sea level rise compared to salt water groundwater intrusion.

Cooperative Watershed Management (CWM): Beth reported that this round of CWM funding received \$2.6M in requests with \$1M to award. The projects were all very competitive which made it a challenge for ranking. This year they saw several freshwater projects which was encouraging since it is one area we haven't made as much

progress on recovery targets. Beth highlighted some projects that will be receiving awards: Cherry Creek Ph. 2, Beckler Confluence, Duvall screw trap monitoring, steelhead monitoring, some smaller riparian planting projects, and fish screens for the mainstem. Beth will send out a complete list.

Orca Bill: There is an orca bill which has a rider on dredging calling out the Snohomish basin. Mike is looking into the matter further. The Conservation Commission is listed as the lead organization. The dredging is being characterized as gravel maintenance and claims to support salmon habitat and benefit farmers. There is no funding associated with the bill. Other counties have been exploring dredging too. Pierce County spent around \$1M on a feasibility assessment. King County is performing an assessment currently. They will likely return similar findings – it's not worth the cost.

Project Updates:

- Cherry Creek Ph. 2: Rodney gave an update on the project. Phase 1 is going to construction this summer. Phase 1 was complicated by soil disposal. The solution to expensive off-site disposal will hopefully be to apply it to reinforcement of a levee in DD7. An exemption will be needed from King County in order to do this. Otherwise, disposal will cost \$2.2M.

Several other challenges have arose with the project. Among other things, the existing road bridges near the site are too narrow and cannot hold the weight required for construction. Additional permitting will also be needed for working in the right-of-way. The project managers would like to re-scope the project in light of the complications. This would reduce the scope of work and return \$150K.

Tech Comm. members had questions about the engagement efforts with landowners and King County on granting the necessary exemption to enable the soil to be placed at the levee. There were concerns that the exemption will be denied and/or drawn out for years and stall the project. The project manager confirmed that if not granted the exemption, the project will die. The Tech Comm. asked that there be a set deadline on the exemption ruling so that any return funds can go to other projects in a timely manner. February 2020 is the deadline for a scope change so the exemption would need to be approved by December 2019.

- Smith Island: Mike gave a quick update on the project. The starter channels are looking great. The trees are dying back and falling over. Hopefully, they won't all wash out though. All of the blackberry is dead now, but there are still some plants hanging on. Chum and Chinook presence has been recorded.
- Thomas' Eddy/Mid-Spencer: This project is going to construction. The multibenefit aspect has been a priority (and also a challenge), but things are moving forward.
- Middle Pilchuck: This project proposal was submitted last round. There were concerns among the reviewers about landslide hazards and other design elements. The project manager is working with the Pilchuck Work Group and project review team to address concerns and revise the project designs.

Water Resource Planning sub-basin decisions before the WREC

Beth explained what the WRIA 7 WREC felt was an appropriate scale for the sub-basin delineations. The salmon plan's planning units were proposed since they are based on hydrology and Ecology's watershed characterization. They were also cross walked with the SBPP so that lends themselves to consistency within the basin's planning efforts. Ecology is hesitant about using a higher number (smaller in size) set of sub-basins. They feel that when you have small basins it can become more challenging to find in kind, in place mitigation projects. These basin delineations will be presented at the upcoming WREC meeting on May 9th for the committee's consideration.

Status & Trends Report

The draft is officially out for review. Send comments to Morgan and Gretchen by May 10th. The goal is to wrap up the final version by June. The project team also hoped to develop an executive summary and other communication materials, but may not be able to due to contracting deadlines with the consultants.

Snohomish Estuary Chinook Status Updates

Josh Chamberlain gave a presentation from the system to the project level on the status of Chinook in the Snohomish estuary. This monitoring effort was started almost a decade ago to keep track of the Qwuloolt project's progress and develop a broad monitoring program to inform future projects. The program covers biotic and abiotic water quality metrics.

Josh presented data on the spatial and temporal patterns of Chinook across the estuary, temperature, and salinity. The spatial differences in trends are likely a reflection of rearing in the estuary. Temporally, the rearing patten is consistent with other larger river deltas in Puget Sound. Data indicates that the temperature trajectory influences fish abundance. Temperature patterns have been shown to affect the duration and magnitude of fish presence in the system.

The data presented was from 2012 – 2016. The team is still working to analyze the data from more recent years.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm.