

Meeting Summary
Snohomish Basin Salmon Recovery Technical Committee
Web Conference
9am – 12pm, December 1, 2020

In attendance:

1. Colin Wahl, Tulalip Tribes
2. Emily Davis, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
3. Ben Cooksey, Washington DNR
4. Carson Moscoso, Snohomish Conservation District
5. Cory Zyla, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
6. Daniel Howe, Snohomish County
7. David Dicks, Wildlands
8. Denise Di Santo, King County
9. Doug Hennick, Wild Fish Conservancy
10. Elissa Ostergaard, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
11. Eliza McGovern, WSDOT
12. Elizabeth Butler, RCO
13. Evan Lewis, King County
14. Gretchen Glaub, Snohomish County
15. Jim Shannon, Port of Everett/City of Everett
16. Jamie Bails, WDFW
17. Jason Hall, Cramer Fish Sciences
18. Jen Ford, USFS
19. John Klochak, King County
20. Kevin Lee, WDFW
21. Keith Binkley, Snohomish PUD
22. Kathleen Pozarycki, Snohomish County LIO
23. Kollin Higgins, King County
24. Kirk Lakey, WDFW
25. Lindsey Desmul, WDFW
26. Lisa Tario, Snohomish County
27. Marty Jacobson, WA Dept of Ecology
28. Micah Wait, Wild Fish Conservancy
29. Matt Baerwalde, Snoqualmie Tribe
30. Pete Verhey, WDFW
31. Paul Schlenger, ESA
32. Ryan Bartelheimer, Snohomish Conservation District
33. Ryan Lewis, Snoqualmie Tribe
34. Shelby Burgess, Cramer Fish Sciences
35. Sky Miller, Snohomish Conservation District
36. Susan O'Neil, ESA
37. Tish Conway-Cranos, WDFW

Meeting Summary:

Introductions

Emily opened the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and introduced participants.

Announcements

Colin provided some basin updates from Gretchen:

- Snohomish Basin RFP for SRFB funds will soon be released (~\$500K available, NOIs due 12/23)
- Virtual RCO salmon recovery conference (April 27th - 30th, 2021) request for abstracts has been extended to 12/4
- SnoCo MRC seeking new members
- Upcoming Forum meeting (Dec 3) will be discussing/sharing ideas and concerns for the future of the Forum (ie leadership given retiring Chairs, engagement and interest of members)

WSDOT in the Snohomish Basin: Fish Passage and Mitigation

Eliza McGovern gave a presentation about Washington State Dept. of Transportation's fish passage and mitigation program.

Under the 2017 federal court injunction on behalf of 21 tribes, WSDOT is correcting 90% of their fish passage barriers by 2030. They have corrected 73 barriers since 2013 and have 400 remaining. They prioritize work based on 1) improvements to habitat access, although they don't consider anthropogenic barriers unless they are WSDOT's, and 2) partnership opportunities to collaborate. They get regular tribal input on their priorities. An interactive mapping tool is available that shows upcoming projects, schedules, monitoring reports and photos:

<https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/data/tools/geoportal/?config=fish-passage-barriers>

They completed four projects in the Snoqualmie in 2020 and have several more planned. In 2021 they will be designing for SR 9 crossing of Middle Fork Quilceda Creek and a tributary to the Pilchuck River; five sites along SR 522 between Maltby and Monroe, and several others between Monroe and Skykomish along US 2.

They are working with Tulalip Tribes to address their concerns about mitigating the type of impacts and near the area of impact.

WSDOT is seeking opportunities to collaborate to remove multiple barriers at a time with aggregated funding and other owners. This can create efficiencies with road closures, minimizing community disruption, and save time with staging. They are also interested in habitat restoration projects that would benefit from mitigation funding for potential upcoming projects along the US 2 Trestle, SR 9 near Snohomish, and the Raging River area due to the I-90/SR 18 interchange and widening.

Eliza can be reached at Elizabeth.McGovern@wsdot.wa.gov; Cell: 267-210-7115 (working remotely through June).

Prioritizing King County's Fish Passage Barriers

Evan Lewis reviewed King County's initial efforts to prioritize the approximately 1,000 fish passage barriers they have classified across the county. They created a numeric scoring system and tried it out on two test basins, Cherry Creek (WRIA 7) and Bear Creek (WRIA 8). They had a workshop recently to test the results and are making some adjustments to the system based on input. There is a total of 100 points possible for each barrier – scores ranged from the 20s to 71.

The categories used to prioritize barriers include severity, amount of upstream habitat, habitat connectivity upstream and downstream, and habitat quality of the upstream basin. Bonus points are given for potential use by Chinook and Lake Sammamish kokanee.

They will be evaluating the updated scoring system in December, will seek input in Jan 2021 and hope to finalize by March 2021. People are encouraged to reach out to Evan Lewis - Ph: 206-477-9738 | cell: 206-482-4401 | evlewis@kingcounty.gov www.kingcounty.gov/fishpassage

Blue Heron Slough

David Dicks is a lawyer/consultant for Wildlands, a wetland banking company out of CA. He gave an overview of the Blue Heron Slough estuary mitigation bank restoration site, which has been in the works for 20 years. Blue Heron Slough is along I-5 south of Marysville on the east side of the highway. This 353 acre former estuary was converted to agriculture with dikes. The design includes a couple breach sites on Steamboat and Union sloughs, starter channels and side channels. 40% of the channels have been constructed.

Mitigation banks allow people who are impacting wetlands to pay into a bank rather than restoring wetlands onsite. One advantage of mitigation banks is they produce larger projects that have stringent monitoring and adaptive management requirements, rather than the smaller checkerboard mitigation sites that usually have less monitoring. Also mitigation sites get built more quickly with private dollars.

The Blue Heron Slough conservation bank has been in place for 10 years with an agreement between the Port of Everett, Wildlands and NOAA. The site creates 8900 Discounted Service Acre Years (DSAYs), the unit of measure for buying and selling wetland mitigation credits, which is overseen by the Interagency Review Team (IRT). About 1,000 DSAYs have already been sold; they are worth \$10,000-\$12,000 per credit, via a large NRDA settlement with Port Gardner Natural Resource Trustee Council. They were originally going to litigation; instead, the Port brought everyone together to settle claims by purchasing credits at Blue Heron Slough. It was a \$10M settlement for the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) and paid for ongoing construction of the project. The bank service area is generally from Mukilteo to the Tulalip reservation, and they are still negotiating with the IRT on service area.

The dike between this site and mid-Spencer Island was left as habitat to retain spruce forest and to accommodate sea level rise. They may also use material for habitat islands.

Puget Sound Tidal Wetland Barrier Removal Planning Project

Jason Hall and Shelby Burgess, Cramer Fish Sciences gave an overview of this project, which was funded by ESRP in 2018.

Jason said the overall goal is to develop a regionally consistent map of tidal barriers for all delta systems in the Puget Sound region. Tidal barriers are man-made barriers that disrupt natural tidal processes, and include roads, bridges, dikes, levees, etc.

Shelby Burgess then discussed their methods and results to date. For the data discovery step of their process, they identified regional data stewards and secured copies of regional data sets. They then projected the layers to a common reference system, which they used to develop a standardized spatial database. They standardized it by removing duplicates, updating alignments, digitizing unmapped features, segmenting water crossings, and classifying feature types and connectivity. They mapped the extent of distributary channels and used barriers to give each feature a connectivity rating.

Categories for connectivity ratings included unrestricted, partial, significant or complete, and is based on what is downstream in the landscape. So far, 16 large river deltas have been mapped. They are requesting reviews by specific experts to address data gaps regarding the detail captured and data accuracy on status and feature type. Data for 12 deltas have been reviewed and 29 reviews are in progress. Most comments have been about connectivity, feature status and feature type. The online map is available at https://salishsearrestoration.org/wiki/Puget_Sound_Tidal_Wetland_Barrier_Removal_Planning

Preliminary results include 832 miles of barriers mapped, mostly roads and levees. They mapped over 1000 crossing features; only 40% of them were in the existing database. Approximately 16K acres of that mapped are current tidal wetland (totally connected), and 12K acres are disconnected tidal wetland.

They will be working with WDFW to integrate with their fish barrier database. They hope to get funding to map the remaining nearshore in the next year if their proposal is funded.

Roundtable Updates

Cory Zyla said the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum is currently accepting letters of intent for proposals on King County side of basin in SF Skykomish and Snoqualmie through the Cooperative Watershed Management Grant program. See <https://www.govlink.org/watersheds/7/funding/default.aspx> Or email Cory at czyla@kingcounty.gov for more information.

Mike Crewson asked about the outline for the plan update and if any sections are available for review yet. Gretchen said the team is not quite that far along yet with only a draft table of contents still needing internal review. But the Tech Comm will hear more in a couple of months.

Kirk commented on the joint letter out of Olympia and WDFW representatives from different watersheds. The process for Hirst and the WREC is centered on getting water and keeping water in the streams. A permit-exempt well will take water out and we need water for water. The best way to offset an actual water withdrawal is to replace that with actual water. There is a lot of variability with managed aquifer recharge, habitat, and timing projects. The consistency and variability will be significant, but there is a known amount of water being withdrawn annually. The intent of the legislation is to achieve actual offsets not potential offsets. Habitat projects are good for net ecological benefit and purchasing water is difficult. It can't be purchased if it isn't available. But that is the first and foremost priority for the WREC process. The habitat projects can try to offset what we are unable to achieve with water acquisitions.

Denise shared that Seattle City Light and partners were successful in planting 15,000 trees on Stossel Creek property with support from a climate adaptation grant. The property is 154 acres. 51 acres were planted with trees adapted for projected future climate (30-50 years out) sourced from southwestern Washington and California. They will be monitoring on test plots for growth and survivorship. A lot of natural regeneration is occurring. Denise will present monitoring results to the group.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.