



Salmon Recovery Technical & Citizen Committee Meeting

Island County - WRIA 6

7/15/2020 1-3pm

Virtual Meeting

Introductions/announcements

Member Participants: Barbara Brock (Citizen, Co-chair), Paul Marczin (WDFW), John Lovie (Citizen), Tom Vos (SWS), Todd Zackey (Tulalip, Co-chair), Jon Decker (WCLT), Jessica Côté (Blue Coast Engineering), Richard Baker (WWS), Kristin Marshall (SnoCD), Tim Hillman (Citizen)

Others: Dawn Spilsbury Pucci (LE Coordinator), Ann Prusha (IC DNR), Anna Toledo (IC DNR), Carson Moscoso (SnoCD), David Gerth (Citizen)

1) Introductions

2) Updates

- Meeting Notes Approval – June
- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP):
 - There is a hiring freeze and staff furlough – the grant round should not be affected, but work flow is.
 - The action committee needs to update the Regional component of the Chinook Recovery Plan. PSP has the funding, but have not been able to utilize it because of the State hiring freeze. They are looking for work-arounds to address capacity needs, but the update could be put on hold.
- Island Local Integrating Organization (ILIO):
 - ILIO is looking at updating the Ecosystem Recovery Plan (ERP). Because the Vital Signs (VS) have changed and there is much work needed in indicator development, PSP is hoping that LIOs will be able to contribute to the future Action Agenda (AA) in a more substantial way than they were able to in previous versions of the AA. VS are not completely rolled out yet, but they will be different. Funds will be awarded a little differently; it will not be a Near-Term Action (NTA) process from 3rd party applications, but will be more driven from LIOs looking at local needs and soliciting projects.
 - The ILIO is redoing VS including human well-being (HWB). They are creating a survey to find out what people care about in Island County. Dawn will forward a link to the survey when it comes out.
- Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB): nothing new at this time.
- There is a [Puget Sound Federal Task Force](#), with representatives from federal agencies, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Army Corps of Engineers, USFWS, DOD, NOAA, etc. They were formalized in 2016 by MOU among the agencies. This was developed out of a caucus in the Leadership Council. There is a Task Force in Chesapeake Bay. They FTF has been championing the Save Our Sound Bill in the Federal budget.

3) New Business

- Reschedule September meeting (SRFB conflict):
 - Dawn will send out a Doodle Poll to find another day to meet. We might skip this meeting – we can decide in August.
- Letter of support request – Whidbey Camano Land Trust (WCLT) for Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) application:
 - This is similar to the letter of support requested last month for the WCLT’s NFWF application. WCLT is requesting \$1.5 million from ESRP for acquisition and restoration planning. The group decided to approve Dawn to write a letter of support. She will send this out Friday. She will also send out the previous letter to the group.
- Members – two openings: MRC and County
 - MRC
 - Matt is balancing business and kids. He wants to stay on the MRC but not the extra duties involving representing the MRC in committees. He will still be available, but the MRC will be working on providing another representative. This appointment will need Commissioner approval.
 - County:
 - There are 2 county seats opening; Hannah Liss and Tansey Schroeder. Hannah has joined IC Natural Resources. She is keeping her seat, and is busy with the COVID-19 response right now. She will pitch in when she can. Tansey is leaving the county. Dawn will ask Public Works if they want to send someone. These appointments will not need Commissioner approval.

4) Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) Request (via PSP)

“SRC requested that lead entities send PSP and SRC Executive Committee the top 3-5 obstacles to get to salmon recovery in their watershed and big projects that the recovery community can tackle and champion from a regional perspective to help address those obstacles by **August 7**. This information will be helpful to the Partnership and SRC as we update the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan regional chapter.”

- SRC drives a lot of what we do with salmon recovery. We want to use policy weight to start affecting change in that area.
- Dawn will provide an update when she submits our ideas.
- Dawn then went over her ideas, and group members also shared their own:
 - Landowner willingness: conflicts between private property on lowlands and inundation. It takes a long time and lot of studies to put water near low-lying homes. There is a lack of good solutions.
 - Predictability of funding: we have expensive projects, and small non-government organizations (NGOs) will invest money into planning without assurance that they will be able to implement them. This affects their ability to staff these projects.
 - Staff capacity: there needs to be more capacity from those who are willing and able to do the restoration projects that take multiple phases.
 - Lack of streamlining in the grant process: for example, for the Hoypus Point project, Lisa is applying to several grants to go from feasibility to design to construction. This could be more efficient.
 - Finding funding: organizations (such as WCLT) put a lot of work into putting in for matching grants to cobble together funds.

- Monitoring: more funding for monitoring will let us know if we're doing the right things in the right places.
- Application assistance: there could be more efficiencies on the application assistance side. It is time consuming especially for those who do not have the experience to do it. There may be ability for organizations to use project development funds to pay someone to do that for them, especially with scoping and cost.
- Sea level rise: we are still in the model of trying to recover salmon through a mechanism of funding coming from somewhere and jumping on opportunities as they come along. There's not enough money to do what needs to be done. We lack a plan as a nation about sea level rise. We try to take action on public land or land that we purchase. There are not a lot of options with private land. Buy-out programs or looking into how to support nearshore homeowners might help. Island County (IC) does not have the tax base to buy up properties, such as in King County. This directly impacts inundation issues. In the absence of a framework, state or regional, we are not in a position to take care of this. We lack regulatory support to implement changes on private land. Enforcing and introducing regulations would help. It is hard to tell people what they can do on private property. Otherwise, we are restricted by what we can purchase and landowner willingness. FEMA has a program (NFIP) that could help with this, but the community needs to already have issues with sea level rise and demonstrate sustained damages to a certain degree before they are eligible.
- SRFB and ESRP application process: an application for one project needs to be redone for SRFB and then ESRP grant applications. These grant applications are onerous. There have been discussions about changing this, but it hasn't been addressed. They have the same budget structure, but not the same application. It's the same reviewers, but with a different set of rules. It could be a lot more efficient for staff time if the applications did not need to be different. It is likely this way to ensure accountability; agencies are more careful and nervous about distributing funds. The Stillaguamish Watershed Council would be happy to support Island County in pushing this idea forward. New voices are necessary to make sure funding is kept for natural resources.
- Advocating for funding: many sponsors are looking for projects. This could be a good opportunity to articulate the need for increased funding in IC. A lot of good work is happening; maybe showing the regional commission multifaceted work and economic benefits from job creation would be helpful. This could help build political momentum.
- Efficient use of funding: a way to use funding more efficiently could be to send funding for a project collectively and have the sponsors collaborate. Sponsors could use each other for fund matching. Telling a story where there is cost savings and time efficiency without a partner losing funding for capacity would help make this point. Also, forcing the issue that was previously raised by combining studies rather than approving in series is a benefit.
- Permitting: streamlining and standardizing the permitting process at the state level would increase efficiency. The ability to apply for all necessary permits with one application would also be very helpful.
- Lack of funding is the biggest obstacle.

- Mitigation banking: this (private investment funding) may be faster and more efficient way of accomplishing restoration than through grant funds. Groups are buying up shoreline properties, and then allowing developers to pay for restoration via mitigation credits. We want mitigation to be difficult so that it is discouraged, but it is sometimes unavoidable. In some cases, these private groups will work with a Land Trust. Depending on the setup, there could be tax incentives. However, it is important to remember that habitat is still being lost. Mitigation has problems and is complicated.
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5) Planned Project Forecast List and 4-yr Work Plan

- Discuss the work plan
 - PSP wanted a list of projects that we think we'll be doing and initiating over the next 4 years (4yrwp). They use this information to put together a budget request and to serve as a list to others on the salmon recovery portal. The 4yrwp should contain all projects necessary to accomplish or address the strategies in the recovery plan, whether they need SRFB funding or not. This is to represent the cost of recovery as a whole.
 - The Planned Project Forecast List (PPFL) is for RCO and is a 2-year forecast. This process exists because RCO went to legislators to find out what they need to see to give better funding. Legislators wanted a list of projects. We pushed back a little because projects change (scope and budget). The compromise is that they want a list of projects for two years with some certainty. We're not locked in to these. They want to know that there has been some vetting. We can still add projects of opportunity.
 - A list of a 4-year horizon goes to PSP. The dollars will be guesses. The 2-year list goes to RCO. Everything will also be on the 4-year work plan.
 - It is better to put forward an accurate and ambitious list and revise it later.
 - The projects that do not have an "x" in the PPFL or 4YRWP columns will need to be tiered and scored for salmon benefit.
 - For the Planned Project Forecast List (PPFL) and other restoration projects, we need to be about 70-80% sure that if we got funding, we could implement the project in four years (funds life-span).
- Project Comments and Decisions:
 - Culvert replacement (Private): This is a placeholder for a project on a culvert identified and prioritized in the Inventory project currently being undertaken by SkagitFEG. Involves identifying public and private culverts in case the Conservation District wants to do work on this.
 - Shore Friendly is constantly reaching out to landowners. There may be opportunities and plans to help with reconstruction. There is a placeholder project to implement the construction phase of any project that Shore Friendly may have started.
 - Public Works gave us a list of culverts they maintain, along with some details on condition. They recognize that several may not rank highly compared to other projects on the list.
 - East Camano Dr. at Cavalero Creek Fish Passage Culvert: This is a deep culvert. There was discussion about the cost-benefit ratio. It looks like fish have access. It will have to be fish passable, but is not for anadromous fish. It is not a huge priority. Public Works is realistic about it being ranked where it is. The group decided to keep this on the list.

- Columbia Beach Road Fish Passage Culvert: Right now, this connects to a culvert that is not passable. Public Works is likely going to fix it. It is not passable because fish cannot get into it. The stream drops off the edge of a bulkhead. There are complications with the location of the house. It might not be PPFL because we do not have clearance from the landowner. The group decided to remove this project from the PPFL (but remains on the 4yrwp) because it's not likely to be funded in the next few years.
 - East Harbor Rd at Goss Lake Rd Fish Passage Culvert: The culvert arrangement is a mess, but passable. Coho have been found there. It is too steep. Above this point, fish would have some access. It ranks low but if it is not passable we can take it off.
- Meerkerk Gardens Shoreline and Tidelands: This is from WCLT. There is 600ft of bluff shoreline as a conservation easement. The vegetation along the shoreline is intact. WCLT is doing several easements and acquisitions. It is a couple of years out.
- North Livingston Bay Feasibility 2: This project will likely need more funding, due to the work involved in studies. This should come in next couple of years. The WCLT has applied to several other grant sources for feasibility funding. They could get up to 500k for feasibility components. The group decided to keep this on the list in case extra funds are necessary.
- City of Oak Harbor (COH) Marina Armor and Stormwater Design and Permitting: This has been supported by MRC, and looks at the different components of the Oak Harbor Marina. Anna and partners will report on the first phase. We do not know what the COH wants to do yet. IC and Northwest Straits Foundations (NWSF) will not sponsor this; COH needs to do the project management. There is still momentum but COH is behind with meetings. Right now, it's difficult to determine a timeline and it is uncertain as to whether this will be a 2-year or a 4-year project. COH is interested in moving forward sooner rather than later. The removal of the overwater shading from docks is not recommended, because it would require major upgrades to all of the docks. The group decided to keep this on the list to support COH should they plan to move forward with anything.
- WRIA 6 Nearshore Protection Tool Implementation Round 2: This would be implementing the Nearshore Protection Tool, like last year. The group decided to keep this on the list.
- Derelict Infrastructure Removal Project (DIRP): We can use the beach strategies info to come up with groupings and priorities for projects we can group together, and focus on high priority drift cell areas. Maybe a subcommittee could look at this.
- The group decided to remove the Washington Coast Resiliency Project as it is now complete.
- Some projects are more programmatic; they will stay, mostly listed as "active": 06-AMN-01-004, 06-AMN-01-005, 06-AMN-01-008, 06-LU-01-006, 06-NP-01-029, 06-NP-04-024, 06-NP-05-022, 06-NP-05-025, 06-NPP-04-002, 06-PNP-01-014, 06-RMM-02-001

6) Adjourn

Next meetings:

- Aug 19 – Lessons learned actions, bylaw review
- Sept - TBD