

Island County Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas Update

1



AUGUST 27, 2013
ISLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Summary

2

- **FWHCA Overview**
 - What are FWHCAs?
 - Why are we planning for them?
- **FWHCA Update Process**
 - Funding source
 - Consultant selection
 - Goals
 - Timelines
- **FWHCA Public Participation Plan**
- **Questions and Discussion**



FWHCA Overview

3

- **What are Fish and Wildlife Conservation Areas (FWHCAs)?**



FWHCA Overview

4

- **County code defines Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas (FWHCA) as:**
 - land management for maintaining species in suitable habitats within their natural geographic distribution so that isolated subpopulations are not created.
- **Management of habitats to prevent the decline of species' populations and diversity**

FWHCA Overview

5

- **County code designates the following as FWHCAs:**
 - Areas with which endangered, threatened, and sensitive species listed by the federal or state government have a primary association
 - Streams
 - Commercial and recreation shellfish beds
 - Kelp and eelgrass beds
 - Herring and smelt spawning areas
 - State natural area preserves and conservation areas
 - Species and habitats of local importance
 - Floral species on the protected list
 - Areas designated by DNR's Natural Heritage Program

FWHCA Overview

6

- Why are we planning for FWHCAs?



FWHCA Overview

7

- **Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that local jurisdictions protect Critical Areas**
- **Per state regulations Critical Areas that must be protected include:**
 - Wetlands
 - Areas critical to recharging aquifers
 - Frequently flooded areas
 - Geologically hazardous areas
 - Fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas

FWHCA Overview

8

- **Counties and cities must review and, if necessary revise their comprehensive plans and development regulations to comply with the GMA**
- **Island County must update FWHCA portion of the Comprehensive Plan along with development regulations**
 - On or before December 1, 2005
 - On or before June 30, 2016 and every 8 years thereafter

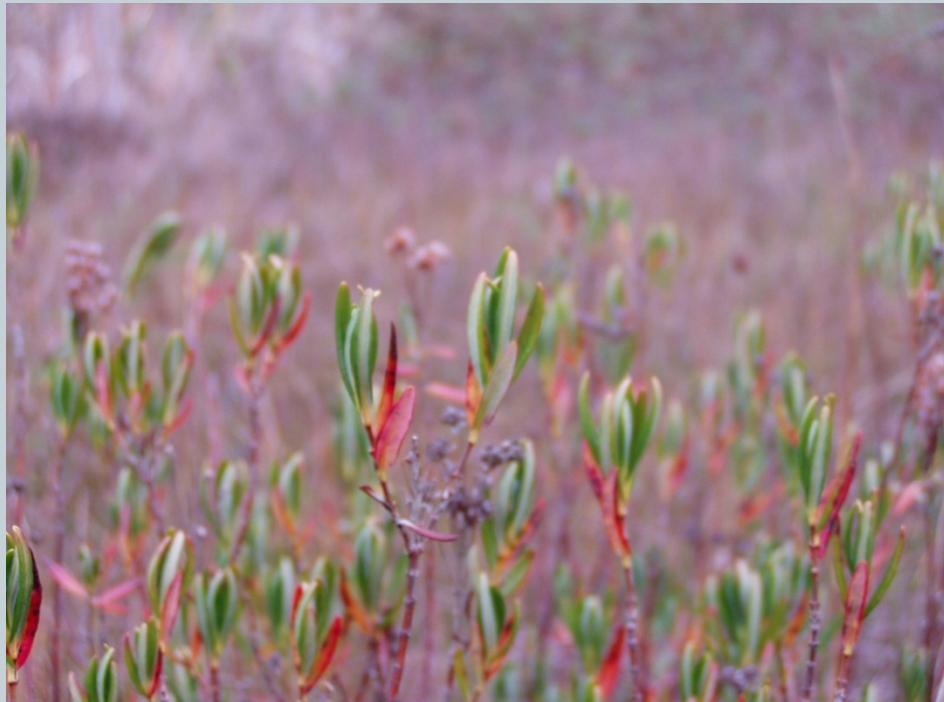
FWHCA Overview

- **Island County updated the comprehensive plan and regulations in 2005**
 - Failed to update FWHCA component and regulations
- **As a result, Petition for Review by Growth Management Hearings Board was filed**
 - December 13, 2012
- **Growth Management Hearings Board issued compliance order and compliance schedule**
 - January 25, 2013
 - Revised compliance schedule issued on February 6, 2013

FWHCA Overview

10

- **What are the implications of the Growth Management Hearing Board order?**



FWHCA Overview

11

- **Island County must take legislative action to update and revise the Critical Area Ordinance and development regulations in regards to FWHCA.**
 - This must be based on best available science
- **Compliance Status Report due January 31, 2014**
- **Compliance due July 24, 2014**

FWHCA Update Process

12

- How do we propose to update the FWHCA rules and regulations?



FWHCA Update Process

13

- **Received funding resources**
 - National Estuary Program (NEP) Puget Sound Watershed Protection and Restoration Grant
 - ✦ \$250,000 awarded
 - ✦ \$90,000 match
 - Tulalip Grant
- **These grant resources will be used to hire and oversee a consultant**
 - Selected The Watershed Company
 - Contract approved August 19, 2013
 - ✦ \$250,000 from NEP grant will fund the contract

FWHCA Update Process

14

- **FWHCA Update Tasks:**

1. Review best available science (BAS) for FWHCAs
 - ✦ Final BAS Bibliography – October 31, 2013
2. Assess condition of FWHCA in Island County
 - ✦ Baseline and analysis maps - November 29, 2013
3. Prepare BAS report and recommendations
 - ✦ Complete final report – December 31, 2013
4. Draft revised policies and regulations
 - ✦ Prepare draft regulations – March 21, 2014
5. Support adoption of revised FWHCA regulations
 - ✦ New regulations adopted – before July 24, 2014
6. Provide information on lessons learned

FWHCA Update Process

15

- **Schedule is based on GMHB Order and grant deliverables**
 - May shift due to unforeseen circumstances

FWHCA Update Process

16

- **Technical Advisory Group (TAG)**
 - Committee consisting of a group of scientific experts whose role it is to peer review draft documents and policies and provide technical feedback
 - Consisting of up to 15 members
 - Technical experts will be invited from a variety of organizations including Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Ecology, tribes, environmental groups, etc.

FWHCA Update Process

17

- **Public Participation Plan**
 - Developing a plan to comply with public participation requirements in the WA GMA (RCW 36.70A)
 - Structure is similar to the plan for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan review and update
 - Based on the deadlines established by the Growth Management Hearings Board and the NEP grant
 - Intend to have a public hearing on the plan in 2 weeks

FWHCA Update Process

18

- **What are the next steps?**
 - Had kick-off meeting with consultants August 19, 2013
 - Assemble the TAG
 - Consultant beginning work on BAS and FWHCA assessment
 - Providing work products from each of the tasks as we receive them from the consultant

Questions

19

- Thank you for your time
- Questions/discussion

