

WRIA 14 Lead Entity Committee
Mason County Public Works Public Meeting Room A
6/21/2018

In attendance	
Margie Bigelow, WDFW	Mitch Redfern, MCD
Evan Bauder, MCD	Laurence Reeves, Capitol Land Trust
Kay Caromile, RCO	Jenn Symons-D'Annibale, note taker
Alissa Ferrell, RCO	Erik Schwartz, MCPW
Jamie Glasgow, WFC	Shelley Spalding, Citizen
Jennifer Holderman, MCD	Scott Steltzner, Squaxin Island Tribe
Jeanne Kinney, TC	Bill Young, Citizen
Carolyn Maddox, Citizen	Sarah Zaniewski, Squaxin Island Tribe

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

Committee met new RCO Salmon Grant Manager, Alissa Ferrell. LEC provided brief overview of agenda to prep committee for decisions needed later in meeting.

Project Presentation—Informative

Skookum Valley Acquisition

Project sponsors, SIT, are proposing to acquire 649 acres floodplain and upland wetlands within the Skookum Creek basin. Skookum Creek is identified as a Tier A stream in the *Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Plan* for WRIA 14. 3 of the 4 properties are currently managed for agricultural and have minimal riparian areas (~92%). The other property is managed for forestry with approximately 60% of the riparian area intact. Once the property is acquired, sponsors will remove all but three structures and replant in order to minimize invasive and promote native establishment. Additionally LIDAR reveals relict side channels and a fairly channelized main stem. This project represents a critical opportunity with all landowners willing to sell concurrently. Salmonid species utilizing this area for rearing include coho, chum, steelhead and cutthroat and spawning for coho and chum. This project is being proposed for both large capital PSAR and SRFB funds, with a full \$3.6 M ask from PSAR and \$856K from SRFB. Acquisition prioritization includes the Skookum and Reller Ranches, due to age of current property owners. The other property owners are willing to wait a few years to allow fundraising to occur.

The committee questioned whether steelheads exist in this drainage. DFW documents presence however a major crash of the fishery occurred in the 1980s. The committee also asked whether public the will be able to access the acquisition for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. Passive access will be established. Hunting is prohibited in proximity to structures and fishing is permissible in this basin. The committee also asked whether logging will occur in the interim on the Port Blakely property. Apparently the timber is low quality and hard to access.

Jones Creek Fish Passage and Riparian

Project sponsors, MCD, are proposing a culvert replacement and concurrent riparian planting along Jones Creek. A Tier 3 stream that flows into Pickering Passage, this barrier sits .68 mi

upstream, goes dry upstream of the barrier but likely has good spawning and rearing habitat in Winter, Fall and Spring. Additionally this project will likely benefit all life history stages of Coho, Chum and Cutthroat. No barriers exist upstream of the one identified for this project and the proposed design includes a concrete box with a lid. The planting will consist of a minimum of 2 acres and projects sponsors are currently negotiating with the land owner to set back exclusionary fencing and expand work into adjacent agricultural field.

The committee questioned the current buffer and the proposed CREP planting plan; the current buffer looks good, what more do you propose? The project sponsor identified the need for improvement; lots of invasive species as well as the wooded area needing additional understory plantings. Will plantings occur within the exclusionary fencing? The project sponsor affirmed and clarified that the exclusionary fence will be moved at least 50 ft. out (currently at 5-15 ft.) and PS believes the landowner will allow for even more.

Winter Creek Passage and Riparian

Project sponsors, MCD, are proposing a culvert replacement and concurrent riparian planting along Winter Creek. A tributary to Tier A Gosnell Creek, removal and replacement of this barrier will provide access to .75 miles of habitat that will benefit all life history stages for Coho, chum, Steelhead and cutthroat as well as an additional 1.38 miles that may be accessed during high flows. Riparian plantings will include 4.5 acres of invasive species removal, planting natives, conifer establishment and 5 years of maintenance. Review panel members recommended using a corrective action form to consider alternatives, to use a stream simulation design and adjust design accordingly. MCD engineers are in the process of making these adjustments.

The committee questioned that if project is funded, can 60% designed be reviewed? Project sponsor affirmed. What is the width of a CREP buffer? The average buffer must be 70 ft., and within a range of 50 to 180 ft. Since the culvert exists within a private road, who owns it? The landowner owns it however if SRFB funds are used then the landowner is required to keep it intact for 10 years. RCO enforces and does a site visit every 5 years to verify. It also seems unlikely that the culvert will be removed since 6 or 7 other landowners will rely upon it for passage. Why was an arch and not a concrete box culvert proposed? After corrective action form the design will likely change to a prefab bridge. Can the buffer be expanded? At this time the landowner is unwilling to go beyond the minimum. Does the current budget consider costs of alternative? Project sponsor is confident that the most environmentally sound and cost effective alternative will stay within the proposed budget. Have FFFPP funds been considered for this project? Yes, applied for these funds in March 2018 and awaiting final decision. What is the timeframe for CREP funding if this project doesn't receive funding this year? Once a CREP plan is approved, funds are available for three years.

Twin Rivers Restoration

Twin Rivers Ranch is a 125 acre acquisition by the Capital Land Trust located at the head of Oakland Bay and the mouths of Deer and Cranberry Creek. Project sponsors, Capitol Land Trust, propose a variety of restoration and improvement projects on the property including removal of a bridge on Cranberry Creek that acts as a partial barrier during high flows, removal and clean up of several buildings some that lie in the active floodplain, remnants of the former land owners, and planting and maintenance in 5 acres spanning between the two creeks. Cranberry Creek is identified as a Tier A stream and DFW has identified chum, Coho, cutthroat and steelhead utilizing this creek. Project sponsors have also consulted with DFW on the bridge and they recommend removal. As an accredited land trust with several properties in their portfolio long term stewardship is an ongoing effort and includes monitoring all properties annually, regular restoration monitoring and maintaining a dedicated stewardship endowment. Additionally work at Twin Rivers has been ongoing and this ask will sustain this continued effort.

The committee wanted to know whether moving the garage out of the active floodplain has been considered. The project sponsor responded that in order to keep cost down, moving is not feasible and that it would probably be less expensive to demolish it and rebuild elsewhere but didn't think that was an appropriate use of public funds.

This work is proposed along a Tier A stream, will remove debris from an active floodplain and

Other committee business: SOW and LOS approval; COI review—informative and decision

Committee members in attendance completed conflict of interest forms. Project sponsors and employees of project sponsor organizations were identified. Project sponsors don't rank their own projects nor participate in the final rating and ranking of projects. One scenario presented a unique set of circumstances, how CLT has interacted with SIT in development of the Skookum Creek acquisition. After discussion the group decided that CLT may rank this project, due to no financial benefit or perceived conflict of interest.

Addendum: After this meeting, CLT was identified as a secondary project sponsor in the Skookum Creek acquisition application. According to the WRIA 14 LE operating procedures, CLT may not rank this project.

The committee also discussed the WRIA 14 Lead Entity Scope of Work contract for July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 and how to allocate funds, either under Task 8, project development, or Task 4, strategy development, or a hybrid of the two. The committee discussed how funds were spent under Task 8 during the previous biennium. Since all project development funds weren't spent down in a timely fashion this money was redirected towards updating the culvert assessment. The committee also asked once a consultant is hired, how far can we get with the

funds available under Task 8? It's hard to say but it'll probably require more resources. In response, committee members also discussed approaches to get the most work done possible with the amount of resources available at this time, including contracting out to collect data, compile it, suggesting how to incorporate it into the strategy and provide next steps as well as highlight true data gaps. The committee also mentioned that more details are needed to incorporate this approach into the RFP for this work. The committee also mentioned providing financial support to experts around the table as we embark on this work and transition to the strategy update. Committee member discussed the importance of using capacity funds towards project development but for now updating the strategy takes precedence. The group voted in favor of using capacity funds towards the strategy update effort.