



## King County

Water & Land Resources Division  
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## MEETING NOTES

### CEDAR RIVER COUNCIL

September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 – 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Maplewood Greens Golf Course  
4050 Maple Valley Hwy., Renton, WA 98058

*Meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm.*

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#### **1<sup>st</sup> Public Comment Period**

There was no public comment during this period.

#### **King County's Climate Change Response – Lara Whitely Binder and Jim Simmonds, DNRP**

Ms. Binder, Climate Preparedness Specialist for DNRP, and Mr. Simmonds, Water Quality Supervisor for DNRP, presented on the steps King County is taking to prepare for and mitigate effects of climate change. Ms. Binder said when extreme events occur, it will be county and state governments, not federal, on the “front lines” for response. She said the County Executive considers climate change a paramount challenge for our and future generations.

Climate change has many impacts, including to health, safety, economy, and the environment. There has already been warming across the Pacific Northwest, along with: changes in heavy precipitation, reduced snowpack, shifts in stream flow timing, glacial recession, rising sea level, warming stream temperatures, and continued year-to-year variability. She explained that variability is important in how we experience climate; each successive year is not necessarily warmer, but there is a change in the average temperature over time. She said rapid warming in all seasons of the year is expected in this century. By the 2050s, an increase of 4-5 degrees Fahrenheit is projected for the Puget Sound region.

She continued that in terms of precipitation, years will get slightly wetter overall, with generally wetter winters and drier summers. There will also be more rain, and less snow, at higher elevations. Seasonal patterns will be reinforced. She said by the 2080s, the heaviest 24-hour rain events are expected to be 22% more intense and 2-7 days more frequent per year. Snowpack is expected to decline, with April snowpack in the region 29% less by the 2050s and 55% by the 2080s. She noted that 4-5 years can make a huge difference in terms of snowpack.

In regards to stream flow changes, she said there will be higher winter flows, earlier peak runoff, lower and warmer summer flows, and longer summer low-flow periods. There is a 19% expected increase in flow volume for 100-year flood events. The Cedar River is projected to experience a shift in peak flow timing due to warmer temperatures, and 25% lower summer flows. The basin will likely shift to rain-dominant instead of snowpack-based. Warmer stream temperatures, 4+ degrees by the 2080s, are also expected. The flow changes will also result in increased landslide risk (due to higher precipitation and soil saturation) and changes in sediment transport (more in winter, less in summer).

She also said there will be a higher risk for forest fire, insects, and fungal diseases stressing trees. There will be strong implications overall for rivers, floodplains, and their communities: increased demand for water/irrigation, implications for infrastructure, among others. In terms of sea level rise, a six-inch rise is expected by 2050, up to two feet by 2100.

Ms. Binder then discussed the County's preparation efforts for these impacts. The overall map and five-year-blueprint for County action is called the Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP). Key components include decreasing countywide carbon pollution by 80% by 2050, and strengthening community resiliency. Another factor is strengthening regional resilience by improving coordination between local cities, organizations, and other partners.

Mr. Simmonds then reviewed key concepts of the Preparation Overview: doing “good work,” understanding projected changes and their impacts, incorporating climate change into capital/operating programs (building things to last), and working with partners and communities. He listed examples of such actions: raising freeboard on levees to three feet, public outreach for winter storm preparation, the “Firewise” forest program, raising shoreline wastewater facilities above sea rise, and riparian tree planting to help water temperature for salmon.



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There are 19+ priority actions listed in the SCAP, addressing: stormwater, flooding, sea level rise, water supply, and other factors the County plans to address within the next five years. Such actions include: analyzing changes in rain intensity, analyzing how intense rain events may affect water conveyance systems (sewers, etc.), and stormwater design modeling to incorporate expected climate impacts into facility designs. He noted that King County is the first major jurisdiction in the country to address such an issue.

Analysis is also being done on watersheds to determine changes to flood frequency and size in major rivers, starting with the Snoqualmie and the Green, with results due in 2018. Impacts are also being factored into salmon recovery projects. In terms of water supply impacts, Mr. Simmonds said Seattle is well-prepared and forward thinking. The County is coordinating with the city on efforts such as water flow management, demand reduction, operational efficiency, and infrastructure improvements.

The County is also developing a strategy to address sea rise, including to county property and infrastructure, coordinating with partners such as the Army Corps of Engineers to standardize an approach, and updating land use policies and regulations for unincorporated areas. The County must consider factors such as life of a facility vs. timing of climate change, costs of addressing these impacts now vs. later, confidence in projections, legal risk of not addressing the impacts, and ensuring that data, while not perfect, is the best available.

Mr. Simmonds opened the topic up for questions. Tom Allyn asked if the County has done an inventory of at-risk infrastructure and industry. Ms. Binder replied communities can do a vulnerability assessment to determine what would be at risk. Tacoma has done one, the Stillaguamish tribe has done a natural resources-focused one, and Seattle has looked in the Lower Duwamish area at populations vulnerable to sea rise and how many road miles might be affected. She said the full report of Seattle's efforts is online, but she didn't think there was a central file for King County yet.

One public commenter noted heat stress is also a factor in tree mortality, and that affected trees pose a hazard, especially along rivers and roads, and as a fire hazard. Larry Phillips observed that in the Cedar River basin, while a lot of funds are being invested in response to impacted snowpack and water flow levels, there needs to be a close eye kept on how these funds are prioritized. He said infrastructure needs to be considered as well as salmon needs. Mr. Simmonds agreed he would like to expand the County's study to all watersheds, but there was not funding at this time.

Mr. Phillips also said public funds should be spent in a way that better manages adaptation and flexibility. Ms. Binder answered there was a technical aspect to all this work, such as how precipitation data is translated into width metrics for banks and culverts. She said the County is working all of these angles.

### **Riverbend Demolition Update – Nathan Brown, CRC Coordinator, DNRP**

Mr. Brown reported that demolition at the Riverbend site started in August and is expected to complete by October 25<sup>th</sup>. 60 homes have been slated for demolition, with all above-ground elements removed. He said there would be no below-ground work on the site until Phase 2 of the process, due to permitting issues and proximity to shoreline.

Further steps for the demolition are: abating hazardous waste in the trailers, such as asbestos, silver coating on the roofs, and caulking; demolishing the trailers with a goal of diverting 80% of waste from the landfill; laying down straw for weed and erosion control; and securing the site until Phase 2 begins. Phase 2 will involve below-ground work and setback of the levee. All underground structures will be removed. The goal is to restore the floodplain, increase floodwater storage and conveyance, and reduce flood risk to neighboring areas. The current design of the project is 30% done, and public meetings will be held this winter when this is closer to the 60% mark. Jon Hansen of DNRP leads the design efforts. Mr. Brown then showed pictures of the site as it was today.

Ron Straka asked the cost of Phase 1; Mr. Brown said the estimate is \$750K. However, this is likely to change, as it was discovered that older trailers had another layer of silver roofing, which led to a need for re-assessment. This is expected to cost another \$70-80K. The funding will come from several sources, such as Parks, grants, SWM fees, and the county Flood District. A public commenter asked about long-term public access to the site during construction. Mr. Brown replied there would be no public access until the project is completed, likely after Phase 2. Another question asked about Phase 2 funding; Mr. Brown said it was funded. Another commenter asked if trees would be planted and allowed to root along the river at the site. Mr. Brown said he believed the goal is to widen the river and do a levee setback, but he could ask Jon Hansen to come back and speak about that. Melinda Woodard asked if the County is actively purchasing properties near the river. Mr. Brown answered that he believed so, but Tom Beavers, the Cedar River basin steward, should know for sure.



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## Updates & Announcements

- August 12<sup>th</sup> Trash Pick-Up Event: Mr. Brown spoke on the recent Cedar River trash pickup event, led by Bruce Tyson and sponsored by the County and several local businesses. He said there were 65-70 volunteers who gathered 90 bags of trash and tansy ragwort. The pickup started at Riverbend Park and included several sites on the river, including Belmondo Reach, Larry Phillips and Habenicht Natural Areas, Landsburg, Cedar Grove, and Cavanaugh Pond. Prizes and equipment were provided by sponsors, and local naturalists gave a presentation on the history of the basin and salmon migration. Mr. Brown noted it is planned for these pickups to be annual events, and that one sponsor, Orvis Company, is interested in incorporating school students. Larry Phillips and Steve Farquhar thanked the County, CRC, and all involved.
- WRIA 8: Ron Straka reported that the updated salmon recovery plan was adopted at last week's Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting. He said that between now and March, members of the SRC will undergo the ratification process for the plan.
- Future Topics for CRC: Mr. Brown said he is part of an "Equity and Social Justice" project at the County, and asked the CRC if they would be interested in presentations on how ESJ can be addressed in the CRC's work. The Council seemed agreeable to this.
- Riverbend Club House Follow-Up: Mr. Brown said there was a discussion underway in DNRP's Parks division on whether to pursue a "Request for Qualifications," to determine community entrepreneurial interest in the Riverbend site. If they do not, the county's Facilities Group will pursue contracting options.
- Other:
  - Tom Allyn: Mr. Allyn reported he is working with a local beekeeper and the County's noxious weeds program to notify local beekeepers when large chunks of pollinator-supporting plants are removed. During a recent weed removal, this keeper lost dozens of hives due to a lack of forage.
  - Steve Farquhar: Mr. Farquhar reminded all that the Cedar River Salmon Journey program begins in October, with 4-5 locations on the river for public tours. He can be contacted for more information.
  - Log Removal: A member of the public asked for any new comments on clearing logs from the river, and whether there is a sustainable plan forward. Larry Fisher replied that efforts were underway to implement a more programmatic and long-term approach to the issue, but tribal stipulations in particular have stymied those efforts. He said a one-year permit was issued to address the logs in the river. He noted that certain effects, such as the loss of large pools for salmon habitat when spanner logs are removed, needed to be considered. He also said this is in conflict with the current WRIA 8 plan, which calls for more wood in the river. The commenter praised the current log removal, saying it looked well done and the river looked healthy.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Public Comment Period

Mike Grijalva, local citizen and chair of the river safety council, spoke of his concerns about a dangerous feature in the river. He says upstream of the golf course across from Regis Park is a large beach, by a sharp S-curve in the river which has a large logjam. As there is a lot of public desire to recreate in the river, this is a dangerous issue that needs to be addressed. Larry Fisher agreed, citing that first responders have had to pull people out of this area. He wanted the CRC to come up with ideas on how the city of Renton and/or King County can address this. Ron Straka said this should be brought to the Flood Control District's (FCD) attention, to integrate into the "programmatic approach" to logjams mentioned earlier by Mr. Fisher. He added that the FCD can do an assessment, and work with appropriate agencies to find a solution and meet mitigation requirements. Nathan Brown promised to relay this to the FCD's attention.

Norm Skjelbreia concluded the meeting by taking a moment to recognize his friend Wayne Wagner, who passed recently, and who in his life addressed many of the issues touched on here at the CRC.

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*Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 pm.*

## Next Meeting(s)

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October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm – "I Love the Cedar River" event, Lake Wilderness Lodge, Maple Valley  
 January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, 7:00 to 9:00 pm – Maplewood Greens Golf Course, Renton