



## King County

Water & Land Resources Division  
Department of Natural Resources & Parks  
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## MEETING NOTES

### CEDAR RIVER COUNCIL

September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018 – 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Maplewood Greens Golf Course  
4050 Maple Valley Hwy., Renton, WA 98058

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*The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.*

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#### **Public Comment Period**

There was no public comment during this period.

#### **Taylor Creek Mitigation Project – King County Mitigation Reserves Program – Dan Eastman, DNRP**

Dan Eastman, DNRP project manager for the Taylor Creek project, presented on the history of the original 2005-06 project and its ongoing updates by DNRP. The project, located off Highway 169 near Maple Valley, was sponsored by the County's "In-Lieu Fee Mitigation" program. This program lets developers pay King County a fee instead of doing a project to offset unavoidable impacts to wetland/aquatic areas. The County uses those fees to buy property and build projects to offset impacts elsewhere. The Taylor Creek site will be a contiguous 27-acre restoration area when done.

The original project objective in the late 1990s-early 2000s was to move the stream away from Maxwell Road, which easily flooded and closed several times per year. The site had an excellent hydrology profile to restore as a wetland: heavily grazed, drained pasture. The ecological goal of the project was to improve stream connectivity and restore the floodplain. In 2005, the creek was moved back into its historical alignment, as shown in 1936 aerial photos. Beaver dams have presented new flooding issues, but the hope is that some of the dams can be used to an ecological advantage.

Mr. Eastman said there is a lot of wood and wildlife in the stream. He noted while sockeye and chinook are present, coho appear to benefit most. This is in large part due to the year-round oxbow off-channel habitat, which is less key to mainstem species like sockeye and chinook. He said a measurable signal increase in coho numbers is likely soon.

Upstream of the original project site, the County aims to build an adjacent wetland complex, to maximize ecological potential of the acquired properties and maximize the number of "credits" generated for the In-Lieu Fee program. He said this stage of the project is not really touching the main creek, as doing so would risk beavers damming the main stream. Aside from removing a couple of bridges, the mainstem is basically being left alone. Ultimately, the intended outcome is for a 27-acre total stream/riparian habitat, with about 11 acres of that being aquatic/stream.

Some discussion involved the Williams natural gas pipeline running through the site. Mr. Eastman said that while it has posed a significant constraint – such as not being allowed to build a wetland over it – it has also provided some mitigation funding. Mr. Eastman says he has heard Williams may be planning work elsewhere on the Cedar River, but is not certain of the status. Other questions asked about project funding. Mr. Eastman replied that one piece was partially funded by Williams, another portion by WSDOT, with some surface water management (SWM) fees mixed in, but the majority are in-lieu fee mitigation fees. He estimated the total cost of the project over the years at about \$5 million. The project is at 60% completion and planning/draft stage now, with construction slated to start summer 2019.

Nathan Brown asked if the CRC would like to see the current project site before construction begins; the consensus was agreement. Mr. Eastman requested that interested parties get in touch with him.

Tom Allyn asked if there are plans for King County to convert several recently-bought properties, west of Maxwell Road, to wetlands. Mr. Eastman said this is likely the Mouth of Taylor Creek project, a levee setback/mainstem project which is in feasibility stages now. Additional discussion addressed a need for specific fish count data to quantify the project impacts. Mr. Eastman agreed, that the fish-count signal from this project site might register on a basin-wide scale, and Taylor Creek may end up a large producer of coho. However, he noted that fish monitoring is costly.

#### **CRC Membership / Craig Sears Retirement**

Mr. Brown reported there are two official vacancies on the CRC, for the Seattle Public Utilities and Local Business



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representatives; and two more possible, for the Forterra and Mainstem 2 representatives. Renton citizen Corinne Young has expressed interest in joining, and been asked to supply her resume and information to the Council for review at next meeting. Mr. Brown suggested convening a small committee to reconsider the Council structure and reclassifying some positions. Mr. Allyn noted if the Forterra slot becomes vacant, he would like to see another habitat/conservation group fill it. Frank Urabeck suggested Mr. Allyn serve on the proposed committee.

Craig Sears, who retires from the Council after this meeting, presented his proposed replacement, Phil Kitzes. Mr. Sears spoke positively of his time on the CRC and of Mr. Kitzes' character and fitness to serve on the CRC. Mr. Kitzes said he would bring a developer's perspective to the Council, though he does design with the environment in mind. He said he might not always have the same view as some Council members, but he believes some degree of "conflict" is good to get new ideas out. He added that any group Mr. Sears is affiliated with is a positive thing. Mr. Urabeck said he was impressed with Mr. Kitzes' resume and that the view from the private sector is important as well as that of the public sector. Larry Phillips and Max Prinsen agreed the CRC facilitates a diverse, healthy conflict in its discussions.

Mr. Sears motioned to nominate Mr. Kitzes to fill his seat on the CRC. The motion was seconded by Mr. Allyn and Mr. Urabeck, and approved unanimously.

Several CRC members and staff praised Mr. Sears' years of service and leadership with the CRC, and congratulated him on his retirement.

### Updates and Announcements

- **CRC Meeting Location:** Mr. Brown reported that the County's contract with the current meeting venue, Maplewood Greens, is still being negotiated for 2019.
- **I Love the Cedar River:** Mr. Brown said the "I Love the Cedar River" meeting will not occur this year, due to staff shortages and a lack of current projects in the County's Rivers section. He proposed rescheduling the meeting to spring 2019, as there has been some feedback that October is too late and dark in the year. Mr. Prinsen suggested tying more of a "heritage" function to the meeting, to recognize the tribes in the watershed.
- **WRIA 8:** Ryan McIrvin reviewed last week's WRIA 8 meeting. They are convening stakeholder groups for a feasibility study of how to lower water temperatures in the Ship Canal; the information should be on the WRIA 8 website. Ron Straka also reported that a letter was sent to the Washington congressional delegation thanking them for their support of the Ballard Locks, and a presentation was given by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Several SRFB and PSAR grant projects were approved, including for Riverbend on the Cedar. He advised getting in touch with Laura West at King County for further information.
- **Fish Counts/Issues:** Mr. Urabeck reported that chinook are tracking at perhaps a slightly higher number than the 10-year average. Sockeye counts were the lowest ever reported, with 10,000 – 12,000 fish making it to the mouth of the Cedar from Lake Washington. He is skeptic about there being time to improve these numbers, but noted about 1,000 sockeye have been taken as broodstock. He also noted surprisingly good chinook numbers elsewhere in the region, and will have more solid numbers by next meeting. Mr. Allyn asked how to track origins of saltwater-harvested chinook, and how many Cedar chinook are being harvested elsewhere. Mr. Urabeck replied that this process is managed by multiple tribes, but that WDFW might be able to obtain the data. He advised contacting Aaron Bosworth at WDFW.
- **Orca Task Force:** Mr. Prinsen raised the topic of the Governor's upcoming task force report addressing the ongoing critical situation for the Southern Resident orcas. Mr. Prinsen requested forming a committee to review the report. The hope is to highlight and elevate attention to any issues relevant to the CRC by participating in the formal report review. Mr. Urabeck stressed the short timeline for this, that things will happen quickly over the next 30 days. He voiced willingness to reach out to his direct contacts on the task force.
- **River Conditions/Issues:** None.
- **Seattle Public Utilities:** Mr. Prinsen said a small committee – himself, Mr. Urabeck, and Mr. Phillips – has convened to work on getting SPU to present to the CRC. The three of them met with SPU and advised them that the public needs to be informed on the fish hatcheries issue. SPU counter-challenged the CRC to assemble the hatchery-managing entities, to encourage them or SPU to produce a report. Mr. Urabeck is working with the state to obtain some documents. Mr. Prinsen will contact SPU in the near future to update them on the CRC's progress.
- **Asphalt Plant:** Steve Farquhar said he believed the permit for Lakeside Industries' asphalt plant is still undergoing environmental review. He also said another entity has stated interest in getting a permit to mine coal in Ravensdale.



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### **Public Comment Period II**

- Mr. Brown said a statement would be obtained from Corinne Young regarding her request for CRC membership, after which the membership review process would proceed.
- Mr. Prinsen announced that Shadow Lake Nature Preserve is now home to the second most significant peat bog in the United States, and the second rarest in Washington State.
- Mr. McIrvin announced the upcoming Renton Run Wild 5K and salmon festival, coinciding with the Cedar River Salmon Journey. More information is available at [rentondowntown.com](http://rentondowntown.com).

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*The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.*

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### **Next Meeting**

October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, 7 – 9 pm, Maplewood Greens Golf Course, Renton.

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