



King County

Water and Land Resources Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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Cedar River Council DRAFT Meeting Notes

September 22, 2020 – 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm (scheduled)
Meeting/Conference Call via Zoom (King County account)

I) Call to Order / Welcome

Chair Max Prinsen called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and welcomed all present.

II) General CRC Announcements / Information (Open to all Attendees):

Jeff Neuner recently became involved with a group writing a motion for the King County Flood Control District (FCD), to propose changing the FCD's focus a more "rivers by design" approach. The current focus is more on flood control-based activities, such as levees and revetments. The group believes new FCD Chair Dave Upthegrove will support the proposal. Mr. Neuner had concern the proposal may go too far afield from the FCD being a "single-purpose" district and keeping funding distinct. When the final proposal comes out, Mr. Neuner will send it to Nathan Brown to distribute to the CRC.

Max Prinsen said he heard of this proposal from King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn. Mr. Prinsen said the FCD is changing in a variety of ways, including now funding the WRIAs. He thinks the FCD will be tapped to look at other issues pertaining to water management, which may lead to other opportunities. Jay Mirro added that for several years the King Conservation District has received regular FCD grants to help dredge agricultural ditches in King County's Agriculture Production Districts, but no work yet in the Cedar basin.

III) Cedar River Public Safety Q & A with King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO)

This topic was requested by the CRC to speak with KCSO about activities on the Cedar River this year, and what to do in certain cases. Rich Barton introduced himself as new sergeant for KCSO's Marine Unit. He has been with KCSO for 21 years, about 10 of those in the Marine Unit. The unit has conducted and assisted in many activities in the Cedar River basin, including rescues, recoveries, and flood mitigation. The unit consists of Sergeant Barton and four full-time officers, and nine more who can be called in as needed. Many resources and equipment are available to them, including some acquired with funding from the FCD.

Cobi Damerow introduced himself as a Deputy with KCSO, assigned by Captain Abigail Steele to handle issues in the Cedar River area since June 2020. He spoke briefly of a murder on June 18; the shooter was caught a couple of days later, but Deputy Damerow was uncertain on further action taken. Since June, KCSO has seen an uptick in incidents in this area, particularly near the 17600 block of SE Jones Road. These have included parties, noise complaints, reckless shootings, and dumped vehicles. Belmondo Natural Reach Area near 196th Avenue SE and Highway 169 has also seen issues such as illegal parking, noise complaints, fireworks, and litter, but nothing severe this summer that Deputy Damerow was aware of. KCSO deputies check the 17600 Jones Road area at least once each shift. At the start of July 2020, KCSO placed "No Parking" and "No Trespassing" signs in the area due to increased crime. Since then, KCSO has focused on asking violators to vacate the area, and most have complied.

Q & A Session:

- **Nathan Brown** asked Sergeant Barton about any activity on the Cedar the Marine Unit focused on this summer. Sergeant Barton said he was still catching up on recent events and not immediately aware of any such activity. The Unit's focus this summer was recreational tubers on the Snoqualmie River. The Unit is largely a response asset, called out as needed.
- **Jeff Neuner** thanked KCSO for the signage and increased patrolling in the Jones Road area, saying conditions have improved. He asked if, since King County is doing another project at Riverbend, there are tools the County can utilize up front or during a project to manage public activity in these natural areas. Deputy Damerow said KCSO would likely implement a similar course of action to the Jones Road area; as needed, they would patrol the area more regularly. Their response is determined from a complaint-based system, as there aren't many deputies to

cover assigned areas. Some residents of the Jones Road area call in regularly if there is an incident, and KCSO usually responds within minutes. Calling 911 is the fastest way to ensure a KCSO response, but the non-emergency line can be called if it's something less urgent, such as reporting kids on the beach.

- **Larry Fisher** asked why road barriers have not been placed in afflicted areas to deter illegal parking. Deputy Damerow replied KCSO is working with John Koon in DNRP's Rivers section, which services the FCD, to place barriers in the 17600 Jones area. Fences were ruled out because people often cut through them. Deputy Damerow also emailed Mr. Koon in September to ask to deploy deputies to protect people picking up trash by the river. He has not yet heard back, but believes Mr. Koon is coordinating something, and Captain Steele is aware of this.
- **Tom Allyn** asked if COVID-19 has affected KCSO's responsiveness, including checking for spanner logs, and coordinating with King County's Parks and Rivers sections. Sergeant Barton answered KCSO is "business as usual," but with extra precautions.
- **Larry Fisher** asked for the status of a couple of trees in the river just below Landsburg bridge. Sergeant Barton said any action would be coordinated with the FCD and John Koon, and KCSO can assist if needed to identify threats, or shut down the river if it becomes a life safety issue. Mr. Koon and DNRP's Rivers staff handle the permitting and paperwork if something needs to be removed. Sergeant Barton said he would have to check if a request for an assessment had gone through. He said while assessments are done year-round, mitigation generally doesn't happen until spring when river levels come back down. Mr. Fisher commented that some wood moved 3-4 years ago still hasn't received mitigation; Nathan Brown suggested this may be a good topic for the CRC. Mr. Fisher continued that WDFW has been trying to influence King County to come up with a "mitigation banking" approach: that if wood needs to be moved, credits can be taken out of a mitigation bank instead of trying to chase mitigation after the fact. Mr. Brown said in fall it would be timely for a presentation to the CRC about wood management in the river.
- **Tom Allyn** said he rafted the Cedar in July to check conditions, but noticed the County's website for these hasn't been updated since 2019. He asked if there are plans to update it for 2021. Mr. Brown replied that since that website is managed by DNRP's Rivers section, he would find out and bring the information back.

For next meeting, Mr. Brown said he has invited an engineer from King County's Rainbow Bend project. He said the recent flooding has jumpstarted the habitat features at the site and there is a video he'd like to share with the CRC.

IV) CRC Updates (As Needed)

- **WRIA 8:** Corinne Young reported that at the last Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting, they reviewed: a letter to the Governor on WRIA 8's legislative priorities, a comment letter on the Lake Washington Ship Canal Master Plan update, a Cooperative Watershed Management funding guidance options memo, and a draft communications outreach strategy framework. Sockeye counts were the 3rd lowest reported in 25 years. Close to 23,000 sockeye were counted, slightly better than the 20,000 expected. This is still far below the 25-year average of 150,000. Chinook counts were also higher than expected: about 4,600 forecast, but almost 13,000 counted as of September 12. Ms. Young will share the meeting files later. Next SRC meeting is November 19 at 2:00 pm on Zoom.
- **Fish Habitat Conservation/Restoration (Sockeye):** Nathan Brown is working to get Jim Scott of WDFW to speak on state recovery efforts at the October CRC meeting. Max Prinsen said Frank Urabeck and Larry Phillips are working with Mr. Scott to set up a meeting with the Governor's office. He added that Lynda Mapes of the *Seattle Times* has interviewed him, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Urabeck several times, and is considering an article about the diminishing sockeye populations. Mr. Prinsen continued there is still much prompting and pushing, with things moving at a snail's pace at the state level, but the recovery effort has not been lost. Mr. Urabeck is pushing as well.
- **Cedar River Watershed:** There were no updates on this topic.
- **CRC Member Updates**
 - Nathan Brown suggested it would be timely in the coming new year to review what is needed in terms of CRC membership and recruitment.
 - King County DLS's Permitting Division is expected to receive a response soon from Lakeside Industries regarding comments on the permit application for their proposed asphalt plant on Highway 169. Mr. Brown hopes to arrange DLS staff to speak on this at next month's CRC meeting. Steve Hiester reported that Lakeside has responded to DLS's questions, but the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council, along with other area councils and at-large citizens, are also reviewing the answers and planning their own response. Mr. Hiester said he would be willing to share an update with the CRC when available. Mr. Brown said he would forward any update to CRC members to respond to individually at their choice. Max Prinsen added he'd heard the asphalt plant at the north end of the lake received press today regarding odors from the plant. Neighborhoods in that area are requesting details about air quality, and what the plant is putting into the air.
 - Mr. Hiester said he is working on the Cedar Hills Landfill upgrade as well, which will also affect the river.

- **Next CRC Meeting:** Next meeting is October 27 at 6:30 pm. Tentatively on the agenda are: Jim Scott with WDFW on state efforts to address sockeye recovery; a report on the asphalt plant and responses from Lakeside and DLS; and a presentation reviewing a video of the Rainbow Bend project. Mr. Brown commented that the CRC should be proud, as they have advocated for restoration at Rainbow Bend for 20 years.

V) Public Comment Period: There was no public comment during this period.

VI) Closing / Adjourn

- Max Prinsen thanked all present for participating and said all need to keep eyes on everything going on; with the current challenges in society, it's not a good time to lose focus on what's going on in the Cedar. He said they need to keep challenging those who can help make sure the Cedar remains in the future for people and fish.
- Nathan Brown said King County's Riverbend project is now in its second phase, involving demolition of underground features of the former mobile home park, and some levee work. Jeff Neuner reported he is across the river from the project. He said none of the work is near the river this year, and most of it is loud. However, the County is heeding posted work hours and construction seems to be going smoothly. Corinne Young noted the significant traffic impacts; a long stretch of Highway 169 has been closed to one lane for the duration of construction. Mr. Prinsen added the Cedar River Trail was shifted and barriers placed to protect people on it.
- Mr. Brown asked if the CRC would like to explore feasibility of an in-person field event, if such an event would be allowed. Mr. Prinsen said the Governor recently released additional leniency for some outdoor group activities, largely for agriculture, but he thought the allowed group size had been increased. Mr. Brown will investigate.
- Mr. Brown reported the Cedar River Salmon Journey is starting up soon; he will send out the information.

The meeting adjourned ahead of schedule, at about 6:42 pm.