



King County

Water and Land Resources Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

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Cedar River Council DRAFT Meeting Notes

May 25, 2021 – 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm (scheduled)
Meeting/Video Conference Call via Zoom (King County account)

I) Call to Order / Welcome

Nathan Brown called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

II) General CRC Announcements / Information (Open to All)

Chair Max Prinsen asked attendees about the effectiveness of last meeting's presentations with Fred Goetz (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and Jim Scott (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife), and the viability of group efforts working together, as it would be great to communicate with CRC partners and Governor Jay Inslee about the sockeye salmon.

III) King County 30-Year Forest Plan: Forest for Our Future - Kathleen Farley Wolf, WLRD, King County DNRP

A) Presentation

Kathleen Farley Wolf is a Project Manager for the King County Forestry Program (KCFP) in the Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP). The King County 30-Year Forest Plan was released in April 2021 after years of effort. The plan originated with the 2015 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP), which had two main actions: the "1 Million Trees" campaign and the 30-Year Forest Plan. Other priorities included a vision for the next 30 years and how the SCAP would guide KCFP's work during that time. The scope of the plan is to develop county-wide priorities and strategies intended to guide the work of King County and their partners, including DNRP-led actions.

The approach to developing the plan was by outreach through methods such as internal and external workshops and meetings, one-on-one meetings, tribal outreach, and online public input to identify seven priority topics: climate, forest health, urban canopy, human health, salmon habitat, water quality and quantity, and sustainable timber. Of these areas, the topic of climate was featured. The KCFP is making sure King County forests are important in mitigating climate change and is thinking on how climate change will affect forests and how to prepare for that. Four goals were identified in this one priority: increase carbon storage, forest resilience, community preparedness, and maintain climate change-vulnerable western red cedar and other culturally and tribally significant tree species.

For each goal identified under a priority area, there are a set of strategies: start with broader strategies intended for King County and other partners, then specific actions led by DNRP. Some broad strategy examples include increasing forest carbon and improving community preparedness. Strategies developed through DNRP-led actions include the seven priorities above, related plans such as the SCAP and the Clean Water Healthy Habitat Initiative, and identifying any additional resources needed, such as funding. The need to find funding for many of these actions over the next 30 years is expected. It is understood that this is an ambitious set of strategies and actions for these seven priorities. The plan also broadly focuses on King County's key roles as a convener, a partner, and incentivizer or barrier remover. The high priorities for additional resources are long-term forest management for private and public forestlands, urban forestry activities, and collaboration with communities and tribes.

The takeaway for the 30-Year Forest Plan is that this is a strategic plan based on shared priorities and goals. The hope is that the strategies and actions can be adapted over time. The plan emphasizes work with partners, tribes, and communities that includes both an urban and rural focus.

B) CRC Member and Public Comment / Q & A

- **Q:** What percentage of King County forestlands is now under King County control? Give us a sense of King County's impact.
KFW: We own about 3% of forestlands in the county. One action in the 'Sustainable Timber' chapter of the plan is to create a demonstration forest and develop management strategies to share with small forest landowners. About one-third of the forests in King County are privately owned, each ranging from a couple of acres to thousands of acres. Many small forest landowners are seeking out more education and information on forest management and incentives, and that shows up in the plan as well.
- **Q:** What percentage of King County do you characterize as forestland? Has that diminished in recent years due to development?
KFW: About 60% is forested. In rural areas, forest cover has remained generally steady over the last few decades. That doesn't mean that forest conditions have stayed the same, however. Urban areas have had a loss in forest cover, in cities as well as unincorporated areas.
- **Q:** The possibility of wildfires in developing areas is becoming a definite reality here too.
KFW: There have been historically infrequent but very large fires in Western Washington. The last large fire was in 1902 and we think of it as something that doesn't exist today; I think starting with the education that large fires do happen and making sure communities are aware that they need to have an evacuation plan will be part of the 'Wildfire Strategy' piece of the plan.
Chair Prinsen: There is a great support program through the King Conservation District (KCD). With the Firewise program, there seems to be mixed messaging about healthy forests. On proper thinning or the reduction of trees, I don't think people get enough education about how that creates a healthier forest.
KFW: We've talked with KCD, DNRP, and others to get clearer messaging for western Washington forests. We do thinning where westside forests are unhealthy, but not for fuel reduction. Our intent is not fuel reduction, but over time, to plant a broader range of species for a more diverse composition and create a healthier and more resilient forest. But with historically huge fires—which normally occurred under strong east wind conditions—those are going to burn through everything no matter what. It's complicated to communicate those strategies.
- **Q:** Haven't some private forests sold their development rights to the County so that the land must remain in forest?
KFW: Yes. We have a Transfer of Development Rights program in which a private landowner can sell the development rights if they're in one of the 'sending areas' of King County, which means someone in a rural area can sell their development rights for the land to be sold and used in urban areas. The trees can still be cut for timber, but it does prevent development on those sites. We've developed a carbon forest program recently and we're working on a mechanism to incentivize private landowners to not harvest a large number of trees.
- **Q:** How much of a percentage of land is federal land?
KFW: It's close to one-third (33%), but I would need to look that up.
- **Q:** How much carbon does a tree sequester?
KFW: It depends on the species, location, and many other factors. King County forests sequester and store large amounts of carbon in part because they are long-lived (some even at 150 years old) and because we have conducive growing conditions.
- **Q:** What's the status of support from King County Foresters for small forest landowners who go through the WSU Forest Stewardship program?
KFW: We are definitely continuing the program and want additional resources to do more of that work. Those classes tend to sell out and we would like to offer more. KCD is an important partner in this work; there is a tendency to split by parcel size, with KCD doing 5 acres and under and King County doing over 5 acres.
- **Q:** Forest owners can get permits for harvesting from King County but also from Washington State. The two agencies have different requirements. Whose is the more stringent and beneficial to forest health?
KFW: I will have to follow up with you on that, I don't have the answer.
Jay Mirro (KCD): I can answer that a little— for forest harvest beyond 150 feet away from a structure; that is the guideline that Washington State Department of Natural Resources has. If you're harvesting within 150 feet of a structure, it's not within their purview. For larger forest harvest, King County is not involved if it's a true forest practices permit. If it's for forest health or forestry harvesting, that's all through the Forest Practices Act.

IV) Cedar River Council Website Updates – Lauren Triplett, WLRD, King County DNRP

A) Presentation

Nathan Brown introduced Lauren Triplett to attendees to demonstrate the improvements made to the CRC website (www.cedarrivercouncil.org). Ms. Triplett is an Administrative Specialist for WLRD in the King County DNRP. She took on the project to improve the website and how to make it more readable and transparent for the public. Proposed designs and changes in formatting were reviewed and feedback was welcomed.

B) CRC Member and Public Comment

- The following suggested changes and additions were proposed after the overview:
 1. Chair Prinsen suggested clarifying that the sign-up email link is for CRC meeting announcements and not volunteer announcements, and that meeting notes should all be marked as ‘draft’ since CRC does not have a formal meeting notes adoption process. All meeting notes would be subject to change if needed.
 2. Vice-Chair Melinda Woodard proposed the public visit and view the most active projects in the Cedar River area as a way for people to see things happening near them in a more interactive setting. Vice-Chair Woodard also recommended an interactive map with the project sites shown in a thumbnail format.
 3. Chair Prinsen stated that possibly creating a page explaining certain terminology would help give people an orientation as to what is being discussed in meetings or otherwise.
 4. Vice-Chair Woodard recommended including photographs of individual CRC members or a group photo.

V) CRC Updates (As Needed)

- **Lakeside Industries Asphalt Plant:** Councilmember Phil Kitzes said that the last message received was that possibly in mid-June or July, King County Department of Local Services (DLS) is looking into deciding on the applicant. There is more testing being done on site now, however, Fereshteh Dehkordi, Project Manager for King County DLS, says no decision has been made regarding applicant approval or denial.
- **WRIA 8:** Councilmember Corinne Helmer reported great activity from the last Salmon Recovery Council meeting:
 1. The SRC met with Congresswomen Suzan DelBene and Kim Schrier, M.D., to a generally positive response.
 2. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittee updated their language and subject matter for the 2021 grant rounds and future funding cycles.
 3. The Technical Committee reviewed this year’s Cooperative Watershed Management grant applicants, almost double the amount of applicants than in prior years.
 4. The Implementation Committee dealt with habitat acquisition and restoration strategies for Tier 1 stream basins.
 5. There was a review draft of the 2022 budget for WRIA 8 and work plan.
 6. The Washington Department of Ecology presented a draft of a water quality assessment tool and how the tool categorizes WRIA 8 Tier 1 and 2 streams and lake areas to identify areas of concern.
 7. The SRC also discussed WRIA 8 state budget priorities, where the council got most of what was requested in terms of funding, mainly for acquisition and restoration/salmon recovery, wildlife and recreation, and Floodplains by Design restoration.
 8. The SRC reviewed a letter on the Lakeside Industries Asphalt Plant; everyone decided to strengthen the language, asking King County DLS to consider impacts of the plant on salmon recovery.
 9. Project Manager Lauren Urgenson (Regional Partnerships Unit, King County DNRP) presented a report discussing best available science synthesis on Lake Washington/Ship Canal as well as reports on temperatures in the Ship Canal and the impacts of dissolved oxygen on the sockeye salmon, addressing their problems and finding ways to improve conditions.
- **Fish Habitat Conservation/Restoration (Sockeye):** Councilmember Frank Urabeck praised the presentations from last month’s meeting and has talked to Jim Scott from WDFW on what has happened since. Scott hinted that some actions might be taken to improve the survival of this year’s sockeye return. Last year had about 20,000 fish forecasted, and the salmon run came in at 22,000 fish. Only 13% of sockeye made it to the Cedar River instead of the usual 60-70%, indicating a definite problem with pre-spawn mortality in Lake Washington/Ship Canal. The forecast this year is about 25,000 fish. The conclusion last meeting was to do something to turn it around. Jim Scott discussed a focus of the work by the Muckleshoot tribe, WDFW, and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)--with support from King County-- to take fish at the Ballard Locks and transport them by truck to the Landsburg hatchery holding tanks. Excess hatchery water would be used to mitigate temperatures and pathogens of river water in the holding tanks. At least two tanks will hold up to 150 fish each (half males, half females); if there is low mortality, up to 450,000 fry (baby fish) could be produced. The Muckleshoot tribe has stepped up financially to provide engineering and other support. King County has a huge role in that it does have to grant permits for some of this

work. They are hopeful this can get in place and they can learn from it. Expertise among all agencies seem to favor this approach, as opposed to others such as releasing fish at Rainier Beach. Jim Scott is the head of a “Feasibility Assessment” team, which reviews factors impacting sockeye as well as solutions and cost, and has been meeting for the past 6-8 months. They are hoping to wrap up work this summer. Councilmember Urabeck suggested in fall to have a presentation and public event by that team to discuss the different factors as there is still much confusion and thinks that Scott has done an excellent job to make everyone aware of them. The big question is: can we ever get back to fishable levels? This has become a concerted effort, it has public support, and even has some media interest. Councilmember Urabeck commended CRC for their instrumental efforts and thinks they are moving in the right direction.

Chair Prinsen praised Councilmember Urabeck’s knowledge and direct support and suggested that the CRC write another letter to Governor Inslee recognizing the efforts being made and bringing the teams together. Nathan Brown called to the council for a decision by verbal consensus, with all councilmembers in favor. Chair Prinsen stated a letter can be drafted for review in the next two weeks for CRC approval at the next meeting.

Councilmember Urabeck stated that Jim Scott supports a public fall presentation of a feasibility assessment and feels there is an obligation to come back and share information in a structured way. It was suggested that a representative from the Governor’s office be invited as well, which Chair Prinsen supported in including in the letter. Nathan Brown said it was unclear what King County policies for in-person meetings will be in the near future, but it will be kept on the radar.

- **Cedar River Watershed:** There were no updates about this topic.
- **CRC Member Updates:** There were no updates about this topic. Chair Prinsen asked all attendees to remind neighbors and friends about upcoming CRC meetings.

VI) Public Comment Period

Rob Larsen, a representative for the Coastal Conservation Association, was pleased with the council moving forward on the recovery of sockeye salmon.

VII) Closing/Adjourn

Nathan Brown wished everyone a happy Memorial holiday. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.