

Snoqualmie Fish, Farm, Flood 2.0 Implementation Oversight Committee

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

Thursday, October 24th, 2019
Carnation Farms, Alpine Room
28901 NE Carnation Farms Rd., Carnation, WA 98014

8:30 am - 9:00 am: Continental Breakfast & Catch Up!
9:00 am - 4:00 pm: Meeting

1) **Introductions, Welcome by Co-Chair (*Tamie Kellogg, Cindy Spiry*)**

Facilitator Tamie Kellogg called the meeting to order at 9:15 am. Ms. Spiry, fish caucus co-chair, welcomed the IOC and praised the efforts of collaboration and compromise from all. Joan Lee, DNRP Rural and Regional Services section manager, thanked all for their participation. She gave special thanks to Janne Kaje and Richard Martin for their efforts as FFF project managers, and to DNRP's Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) Director Josh Baldi for finding funds for a special-duty FFF project manager position, now filled by Beth leDoux.

Ms. Kellogg reviewed today's agenda, noting several items are being moved around due to time concerns. She and Ms. leDoux gave instructions for a brainstorming exercise for IOC members, using sticky notes to highlight key concerns and milestones during the entire FFF process, past, present, and future.

2) **FFF Agreement/Exercise (*Tamie Kellogg, IOC Members*)**

IOC members were instructed to write down their ideas and thoughts and place them on a large wall-mounted FFF timeline/graphic at the front of the meeting room. Ms. Kellogg led IOC members in a "debrief" of this process:

Pre-2013 Concerns:

- Drainage and permitting obstacles and concerns, frustrations over which led area tribes to consider legal action against local governments.
- Multiple catastrophic floods in the Snoqualmie Valley, including one in 2009.
- Conflicts around buffers, water rights, permitting impacts, decreasing agriculture and fish counts in the Valley.
- Gridlock in resolving the conflicts between restoration and drainage efforts.
- Escalating internal and external King County conflicts regarding the at-odds aims of fish and farm interests. Farmers felt they had no voice to speak up about their land or rights, and there was little collaboration between fish, farm, and flood interests.

Things to Celebrate:

- The Agriculture Strategic Plan task force, resulting from discussions on a need for an organized plan for agricultural interests in the Valley, as salmon recovery interests already have.
- Agricultural Drainage Assistance Program (ADAP) coordination and assistance funding increasing on all levels; however, much more work is still needed moving forward.
- Founding of the Snoqualmie Watershed Improvement District (WID), resulting from efforts during FFF 1.0 and funding from Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance (SVPA) donors. The WID has taken lead on many area landowner issues.
- Relationship-building. Each caucus gained respect for other groups, and understanding of each other's needs.
- Task forces have been identified. Landowner outreach has improved, including helping farm representatives feel the community supports their vision of what benefits the community.
- Snoqualmie Valley Hydrology and Hydraulics (H & H) study.
- Ecology funding through the WID.
- Creation of Eric Beach's regulatory/permitting specialist position, in response to a need to clarify and streamline regulatory and permitting processes. The regulatory task force is seeking agriculture drainage goals.
- Introduction of Haffner/Barfuse project.
- Inclusion of the Snoqualmie Causeway Study in the Executive's 2019 Comprehensive Plan.
- Filling data gaps, focusing on science and knowledge-based studies.
- New half-time basin steward position added for the Snoqualmie.
- 2019: Buffers task force, a big milestone. Hopes for a robust buffer incentive program.
- A water quality specialist and fish biologist are working with the ADAP program now.

Other Thoughts/Concerns:

- November 2018 – Technical support requested from the Flood Control District (FCD), with only intermittent attendance from them at early FFF meetings. FCD should be present and fund projects.
- Dave Upthegrove announced he is hoping to become new FCD chair and promote multi-benefit projects.
- FEMA’s audit of King County’s farm pad program.
- 2D modeling – is this the right tool for the Snoqualmie?
- How do the WREC groups and water rights fit into the FFF process?
- Keep FFF permanently staffed to keep engagement in the Valley.
- Prioritize road safety projects.
- Look for opportunities for comprehensive storage, farm worker housing, etc.
- Pursue concrete recommendations to move all areas forward.

3) Flood Caucus Priority & Recent Observations (*Angela Donaldson*)

Ms. Donaldson, flood caucus co-chair, began her update by posing a question for the IOC: What does WLRD need to hear about the recent Snoqualmie flood, and what do *you* need to hear?

The flood caucus is now working on five priorities, with the Snoqualmie causeway study at the forefront. Caucus co-chairs had supported a letter on this to the Executive, included in a transmittal to King County Council (KCC). The caucus will follow up on this. The request does not ensure funding, but hopefully work can progress. Josh Monaghan said while this letter had been sent without full process, all co-chairs had looked over it and determined their agreement, as well as whether the letter follows the main FFF agreement.

Ms. Donaldson said the caucus wants to keep the conversation moving on how to make “bundling” of priorities happen: what else should be done, encouragement for funding, finding safe ways out of floods, etc. The caucus is also working on a flood management plan. Their hope is that proposed 2D modeling efforts will answer some questions, including flood storage opportunities. Other efforts of note include updates to the County’s home elevation program early next year, and a white paper issued on farm worker housing needs, assets, and regulatory constraints. She said the caucus craves guidance on the farm worker housing subject in particular, so it will be public-facing and approved by involved agencies.

Ms. Donaldson said the recent flood reminded her the Valley needs better flood sensors and modeling, to better determine warnings for when roads flood, finding exit routes, etc. She hopes a question can be posed for 2D modeling: if it would allow better predictive modeling of a flood warning system. This would help predict whether farms and roads will flood, as well as help determine the location of the causeway. Snohomish County staff visited Duvall and Carnation during the flood and noted there was some ground capacity to absorb water, which may have mitigated flood impacts further downstream, while the south end of the Valley saw the worst impacts.

Josh Baldi said while there were no major floods last year, County staff say floods are becoming more predictable. However, in this case, the County had predicted only Phase 2 flooding, and it actually reached Phase 4. He posed the question whether this is the new norm, or was this one just different? He said there may need to be a better understanding that these are dynamic floods, to build more dynamic systems.

Cynthia Krass noted this flood was the largest October flood, in terms of CFS, since the 1930s. This flood is particularly devastating due to the farm economic impacts from lost harvests.

4) Updates on Related King County Efforts (*Josh Baldi*)

Mr. Baldi updated the IOC on multiple County efforts that may impact the FFF process:

- **Farm Pad Program:** FEMA is currently auditing County code, citing a need for improvements, specifically regarding its “farm pad” program. FEMA has determined this program is inconsistent with federal code regulating flood storage. This will make implementing farm pads, while not impossible, much more difficult. The County is willing to tackle this challenging conversation with FEMA. Meeting federal requirements is key to the County’s eligibility for the national flood insurance program. There is a deadline of April 2020 to adopt some code changes to maintain this compliance.
- **County Budget Process:** This kicks off before Thanksgiving and runs through mid-2020. It will be due to the Executive to transmit to KCC in fall 2020. Final touches to the plan should be made by April 2020 for a May/June submittal. There are multiple sources that DNRP must make a strong case to be funded from: the County general fund, surface water management (SWM) fees, state and federal sources, and others.

- **Clean Water, Healthy Habitat Initiative:** The Executive wants to lean into his conservation agenda, and is committed to FFF. FFF participants were advised to watch this situation.
- **Flood Hazard Management Program:** This is an element of the County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan, last adopted by KCC and the FCD in 2007. FCD has many resources to implement this work, and County staff are working to collaborate with the FCD on this matter. Some SWM funding to complete this plan should be available by end of 2020, with a target wrap-up in mid-2021. Mr. Baldi has advised County staff this effort will launch, if not by Thanksgiving, then between Thanksgiving and Christmas/New Year’s. There will be a public engagement meeting on this issue. An advisory committee is also in the works, which the IOC will be kept apprised of. Mr. Baldi expressed a need to “hardwire” collaboration between the similar efforts of the IOC and this advisory group on the flood management update.
- **ADAP/Drainage:** A report is in process on the ADAP program, and the possibility of scaling the program up. Councilmember Kathy Lambert has asked what it would take to complete all needed drainage work in seven years. The soft deadline for KCC for County staff to finalize a plan to transmit to the Executive is the end of November. Many factors determine this, including: funding, willing landowners, and prioritizing most critical areas. ADAP is only part of a larger drainage issue. These issues will need to be figured out collectively, and County staff are working with Councilmember Lambert and others to make progress.

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5) **Bundled Activities & Recommendations for IOC Consideration**

Janne Kaje introduced the new DNRP basin stewards for the Snoqualmie: Andrea Mojzak and Denise Di Santo. Ms. Mojzak fills the position previously held by Mary Maier. Ms. Di Santo will be a half-time steward for the basin, focusing on areas above the Falls and the South Fork Skykomish. These positions fill a need pushed in FFF 1.0 for more stewardship in the basin.

Josh Monaghan asked Josh Baldi how FFF can think creatively regarding FEMA’s audit of County farm pads, and how local entities can have a voice on the issue. Tamie Kellogg suggested the upcoming co-chairs’ meeting as a good place to discuss this. Mr. Monaghan asked to consider making it a task on a future IOC agenda.

A) Buffers Task Force: Recommendations on Buffer Widths (*Beth leDoux*)

Ms. leDoux reviewed the task force’s number-crunching to reach final recommendations for variable widths of voluntarily-planted buffers in the Snoqualmie Valley. This began from a uniform 150-foot buffer width recommendation, which would’ve converted 2,600 acres of farmland into trees. This was not desired by many in the agriculture community. The task force classified all Snoqualmie basin waterways based on size, then determined what size buffers best achieved desired salmon habitat functions for each class of waterway. After data was analyzed, final buffer acreage recommendations from the fish and farm caucuses were cut nearly in half from the original recommendation – to about 1,200 acres. Ms. leDoux noted that existing plantings were removed from the task force’s calculations. The final two scheduled meetings of the task force will focus on implementation, including incentives for landowners.

Tamie Kellogg asked for IOC feedback on the presentation. Overall reception praised the work behind the recommendations, their specificity, and supported moving forward with them. State and tribal partners said while they would like larger buffers than are being proposed, some buffer is better than none. The importance of collaboration and flexibility in getting state funding was also noted, but that these recommendations would help in those partners’ internal discussions on the matter. Several IOC members also agreed there need to be ways to make up farmland lost to buffer plantings.

B) Regulatory Task Force (*Eric Beach*)

Mr. Beach briefly recapped a history of the task force and summarized its past and current efforts, including: ADAP, alluvial fans, beaver management, and on-site mitigation. Task force findings are now being reviewed by County Permitting. Mr. Beach said once the IOC approves the task force’s recommendations, a budget package is delivered in the next biennium to the Executive’s office, along with the recommendations.

Remaining task force topics to address in 2020 include: comprehensive drainage in County code, a cultural resource review, turbidity standards, and non-fill options for flood hazard mitigation. At some point a “Farm Practices Illustrated” how-to regulatory/permitting document will be assembled, which will include many of the task force recommendations.

Some farm caucus members voiced concern about the task force’s goals being achievable, and being able to bring tangible solutions to many regulatory and permitting process barriers faced by landowners. Angela

Donaldson said the task force is headed the right direction, and suggested a thank-you letter from the IOC for the Permitting office. Ms. Kellogg advised such a letter could likely be signed by caucus co-chairs instead of the full IOC, to avoid conflicts of interest for IOC members who are government employees.

6) Public Comment Period

There was no public comment during this period.

---LUNCH BREAK---

7) 2D Hydraulic Modeling (*Larry Karpack*)

Mr. Karpack, a hydrologist and professional engineer at Watershed Science and Engineering, presented on 2D flood modeling and its possible implications and applications for the Snoqualmie Valley. He explained that FEMA's current Snoqualmie flood maps use 1D modeling, which assumes only a steady, unchanging flow over time, and has minimal detail. 2D modeling would add details of key geographic features, simulation of more complex flow patterns, and detailed hydraulic and spatial data. In the Snoqualmie, this could evaluate large-scale terrain change effects, or changes in flooding with hydrologic change, and identify sites for compensatory flood storage or with high likelihood of erosion. He said while 2D modeling offers more detail and accuracy among a range of flows, it's often more costly in financial and data management terms, and has fewer experts available. He noted no model can resolve all uncertainty in a situation, but it can still provide insight toward a solution.

Discussion followed on how/if data from 2D modeling could be used to inform future discussions with FEMA on their flood storage requirements, as FEMA still utilizes 1D modeling. It was agreed a separate venue, either via the separate caucuses or an integrated group of interested individuals, was needed to go into more in-depth discussion on the direction the IOC should take on this topic. Ms. Kellogg advised there would be a follow-up email to flesh out details. Mr. Karpack is contracted with the County through 2019, but the contract can be extended.

8) Regulatory Task Force, Continued (*Lou Beck*)

Mr. Beck, ADAP program manager for DNRP, reviewed a proposal from FFF 1.0 for a comprehensive drainage maintenance program in the County – a possible framework for how this may be implemented, and how the current ADAP program may fit into it.

The current assumption is that while initial landowner/community partner aid requests would be fielded by DNRP's Stormwater Services section, multiple partners – the County, the WID, KCD, and others – would work together on implementation. Different entities would fill different roles. Mr. Beck also described ongoing work to identify regulatory barriers and strategies to reduce them, and develop a County program to implement and support comprehensive drainage maintenance. He suggested two types of "pilot projects" intended to test how these many elements would come together: a large waterway dredging, and a floodgate/pump project. He asked if this information matches the IOC's vision for comprehensive drainage assistance, and if they support the pilot projects.

Discussion among IOC members revealed concerns about "diving" into implementing these pilot projects, particularly on potential for damages to in-channel fish habitat. There was also concern about how existing regulatory and permitting barriers to the pilot projects would be addressed. It was agreed that more information and discussion is needed before the IOC can proceed further. Tamie Kellogg advised the regulatory task force to continue to work on these items and return at a future IOC meeting for further discussion.

9) Snoqualmie WID Sub-Basin Drainage and Conservation Planning (*Cynthia Krass, Erin Ericson*)

Ms. Krass introduced a concept of "sub-basin" project planning for the Snoqualmie watershed, and how it impacts comprehensive drainage efforts. She said this has quickly become the top priority for the farm caucus. The WID program already does work on behalf of multiple landowners, and has the support and staff to implement this concept. This concept, she said, would not only deliver comprehensive drainage more cheaply and easily, but with better benefits to fish. "Sub-basin" planning divides the 14,000 waterways in the Snoqualmie basin into inter-connected sub-basins, each one having one outlet to the Snoqualmie River. There are 70 such sub-basins, which are prioritized by size and "wetness."

Ms. Ericson said the WID believes this concept is a place where goals for agriculture align with those for salmon recovery. The WID is asking if this seems like an idea that can move forward, and if so, who wants to be involved in shaping it. The WID can help identify land resources, and the conservation practice to address them: a "conservation plan." The WID says it excels in the practice of "precision conservation," which uses varied methods to reach out to specific landowners. This is done in partnership with the County, KCD, WDFW, tribes, and others.

Ms. Ericson reviewed several examples of “sub-basin” planning undertaken by the WID. Projects are identified through outreach, then ADAP is engaged. Base information for a planning area is gathered, along with listed maintenance and conservation activities, and a monitoring plan. Each year, the WID notifies partners of the annual plan and the collected sub-basin data, and offers them a chance to comment on it.

A key concern in implementing the “sub-basin” planning concept is that, outside of ADAP, there is no pathway for it. Ms. Ericson said if the WID has a plan, there needs to be an avenue to move the project forward, to approach needed jurisdictional authorities to proceed.

Follow-up discussion among IOC members raised several points. Several praised a potential for this process to facilitate larger-scale habitat conservation projects, and mitigate financial impacts to individual landowners. Others were concerned who would shoulder the funding burden of these projects: farmers, taxpayers, the FCD, etc. Ms. Krass replied that while the WID can’t promise to make everything cheaper, projects can be made easier and more transparent. She said the WID can propose to streamline the permitting process, by pulling oversight forward to the planning stage. Janne Kaje asked if it is possible for everyone in the WID to invest some money in this effort, to share the financial risk over time. Ms. Kellogg said the WID would look further into this, and asked the IOC if they supported continued work to develop the “sub-basin” planning concept. General consensus was in favor.

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10) Agriculture Strategic Plan Task Force (*Patrice Barrentine*)

Ms. Barrentine said this task force is set to run through June 2020, and so must finish its work in 18 months. Its purpose is to develop a plan for the Snoqualmie Valley, and serve as a third “leg” to balance out existing fish and flood strategic plans. Its two main goals are to improve long-term farmland productivity, and inform development of acreage targets for protected farmland. The task force recommends a 25-year plan, to be reviewed every 5 years.

Ms. Barrentine reviewed the methodology for their work, adding that the task force will have its first draft recommendations by January 2020. Updated recommendations, incorporating feedback from agricultural organizations, are slated for April. The final strategic plan and acreage totals are expected by August.

Several IOC members asked for specifics on data points such as: need for farm pads, distribution of leased farms, and farm worker housing. Ms. Barrentine said all these points should be included in the task force’s assessments.

11) Update on Large Capital Projects (*Janne Kaje*)

Mr. Kaje’s update focused on the Haffner/Barfuse project. Early modeling, expected by November, should trigger the next design phase. Some issues being faced include locating funding, and implications of proposed plantings for agricultural leases on part of the land. The leases all expire within a couple of years, at which point plantings would begin. Permitting is another issue; the SEPA comment period is expected in second quarter of 2020.

Community outreach is also a concern. This has been addressed so far through community and technical group meetings, flyers, a public website, and a site tour. Downstream landowner “listening sessions” are planned in the next few weeks. Landowners will be apprised of new County findings on expected river behavior from the project and how the project will develop going forward. Meetings with the Snoqualmie and Tulalip tribes will be held in December. A larger stakeholder meeting is planned for February 2020. Mr. Kaje said discussions need to be held in early 2020 about modeling, and about partnerships with entities like the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum. He explained these outreach efforts are in direct response to requests from FFF 1.0, and the project team will be interested in IOC feedback on these efforts come January. He also advised there is a public meeting in summer 2020 on County projects involving placement of large woody debris in rivers, which includes Haffner/Barfuse.

Mr. Kaje asked Cynthia Krass to speak about the hiring of a third-party consulting engineer, Vaughn Collins, by the SVPA to study County modeling in relation to potential impacts from Haffner/Barfuse. Ms. Krass said this is a peer review to address and hopefully resolve local concerns about off-site impacts from the project, so SVPA can comfortably support it. Results will be shared with the farm caucus.

Mr. Kaje spoke briefly on another Snoqualmie basin project, Lower Frew, which is a levee setback on the Tolt River inside the city limits of Carnation. This has been on hold to ongoing land acquisition negotiations with the city and the developer. The County expects to start construction by 2024. Beth leDoux will also send out a notice to anyone interested in attending a visit to a third County project site, San Souci.

12) Develop Road Map for Moving Forward on Acreage Needs for Fish/Farm (*Tamie Kellogg, IOC Members*)

Ms. Kellogg invited all present IOC members who participated in FFF 1.0 to gather in a circle, to discuss the “Farm 4, Action 1” recommendation from FFF 1.0. This recommendation asks for a “cap” on the total acreage of agricultural land lost to buffer plantings and other habitat restoration efforts. The discussion was facilitated through a series of questions posed by Ms. Kellogg, with the group’s answers summarized below:

- **Q1: What were you thinking at the time you came up with this?**
A: This was about balancing agricultural viability and salmon recovery, a need to recognize not all farmland would be converted, and have a place to build trust from. There has been a lot of talk about how much acreage is needed to ensure “viability.” We don’t want to lose farmland or fish. Flexibility is needed to shrink or grow acreage based on needs.
- **Q2: What would change once you had this number?**
A: There would be true understanding of what was needed, and scientifically-based backing to check anyone from grabbing too much land. There was fear that if no limit was set, there wouldn’t be enough land left for a viable APD in the Snoqualmie.
- **Q3: Is there anything you thought of that was out of bounds, that wouldn’t change?**
A: Coming up with an acreage number without a need behind it. This plan can never be static – flexibility is needed to address ongoing factors like climate change, which make future land needs uncertain. We don’t want to tie future generations’ hands. The plan should always be dynamic and checked every few years.
- **Q4: Does the habitat plan need an acreage number? What’s your memory?**
A: More specific data helps put needs in perspective, and allay mistrust or fear over potential land losses. Fish and farm interests are already struggling. There is also a need to incentivize voluntary buffer plantings, and determine the threshold of success for them.
- **Q5: Is there a step that should be taken, not too soon, to think about how to craft that number – who, how, and when this will move forward?**
A: Going forward, we need to be as specific as possible, to alleviate fears and give us further gains into the future. We need a tool to track acreage changeover between habitat land and farmland. Maybe the rate could include waterway miles as well as acreage. That would be helpful, especially around larger rivers. Any data gathered should be transparent. There was a view that an acreage cap is needed so fish habitat interests have incentive to better prioritize projects. How do we incentivize buffer plantings, and encourage resiliency? We should encourage practices that help farmers understand no one wants to lose any land, and there are also things their community can do to help reframe this conversation.

13) Share Finalized Milestones / Queue-Up Exercise to Prioritize Remaining Recommendations (Beth leDoux)

Ms. leDoux passed around a handout for public distribution, a one-sheet primer on the FFF process. She said these would be turned into one-page quarterly newsletters publishing milestones and progress made. She also advised IOC members to take a copy of the FFF 1.0 priorities spreadsheet and discuss among their caucuses how to order these to address in 2020. Caucus co-chairs were directed to coordinate this and advise of any needed changes.

14) Communications (Tamie Kellogg)

IOC members were reminded to visit the FFF website. Ms. Kellogg also advised all to make note of future meeting dates, on the bottom of today’s agenda. Invites will be sent for these meetings.

There was brief discussion whether to hold more meetings of today’s length. Consensus was that it is better to have meetings longer than 2 ½ hours, but that 7 hours is too long. Ms. Kellogg posed the question if meetings should be longer and more frequent, or longer and less frequent. Co-chairs were asked to discuss this in December.

15) Next Steps and Follow-Up Actions

This item was not addressed due to time constraints.

16) Closing/Adjourn (Tamie Kellogg)

Ms. Kellogg adjourned the meeting at 4:03 pm.

**Fish Farm Flood 2.0 Implementation Oversight Committee
Member Attendance List – October 24, 2019 Meeting
Carnation Farms Alpine Room – Carnation, WA**

Gary Bahr, WA Department of Agriculture (*ex officio*)

Josh Baldi, King County DNRP/WLRD (*ex officio*)

Brendan Brokes, WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (*ex officio*)

Tom Buroker, WA Department of Ecology (*ex officio*)

Angela Donaldson, Fall City Community Association

Cynthia Krass, Snoqualmie Valley Preservation Alliance

Denise Krownbell, Snohomish Forum

Bobbi Lindemulder, farmer

Meredith Molli, farmer/Agriculture Commission

Josh Monaghan, King Conservation District

Libby Reed, Sno Valley Tilth

Cindy Spiry, Snoqualmie Tribe

Lara Thomas, City of Duvall

Daryl Williams, Tulalip Tribes