

AGENDA
King County FFF 2.0
Buffer Task Force Meeting #8
Wednesday, Nov 13, 2019
12:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Duvall Library
15508 Main St NE, Duvall, WA 98019

Task Force Objective: The Buffer Task Force will create a variable buffer width decision-making framework in the Snoqualmie Valley that supports salmon health and farming.

Meeting Purpose: Discuss basin planting history, FPP, and the Beavers Working Group as they relate to the buffers task force. Gather your input on issues related to an Buffers Task Force Implementation Plan.

12:00 -12:10	1. Welcome, introductions and grab a bite to eat!	Tamie Kellogg
12:10 -12:40	2. Snoqualmie Basin Buffer Planting History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share planting information from previous years. • Q and A 	Beth LeDoux
12:40 -1:05	3. FPP – What is it and how does it influence planting in the APD? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the status of FPP. • Q and A 	Richard Martin
1:05 – 1:35	4. King County’s Beaver Working Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on progress of the work group and what people in the valley can expect. • Q and A 	Jenn Vanderhoof
1:35- 1:45	Break	
1:45 -3:00	5. Buffer Task Force Implementation Topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review draft initial thoughts on implementation discussed throughout this process. • With the goal of accelerating buffer plantings and providing flexibility for farmers, what are your ideas about how to accomplish the goal? Add to the list of implementation issues. Q&A 	Tamie Kellogg/All
3:00-3:20	6. IOC Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the IOC need to act on next, based on the Buffer Task Force Work? 	Tamie Kellogg/All
3:20 – 3:30	7. Prep for Task Force December Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review timeline. • What went well and what could we do differently? 	Tamie Kellogg/All
3:30	Adjourn	
<p style="text-align: center;">Important dates and responsibilities for Task Force Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please keep your organizations, colleagues, neighbors up to date on what’s going on with the Buffers Task Force. • Next Buffers Task Force Meetings, December 11, 12:00-3:30. • Next FFF Implementation Oversight Committee (IOC) meeting January 16. 		

Meeting Summary
King County FFF 2.0
Buffer Task Force Meeting #9
Wednesday, November 13, 2019
12:00 PM – 3:30 PM
Duvall Library

Task Force Members in Attendance: Preston Drew, Wayne Gullstad, Erin Ericson, Kurt Nelson, Daryl Williams, Elissa Ostergaard, Matt Baerwalde, Chris LaPointe

Facilitator: Tamie Kellogg

Introductions and Material Distribution

- Primary Goals of the Meeting:
 - o Discuss basin planting history
 - o Presentations on FPP and King County Beaver Working Group as they relate to the Buffer Task Force
 - o Gather input on implementation of buffer work

Presentation on Planting History (Beth leDoux)

- There have been no King County Small Habitat Restoration Planting projects in the last 5 years in the Snoqualmie APD
- This data looked at Cooperative Watershed Management grants that are administered through the Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, it summarizes data from 2013-2019.
- 2013-2019
 - o Voluntary, private plantings
 - o 6 projects that occurred were not in APD and totaled 27 acres
 - o 13 projects were in the APD and totaled 53 acres

Acre planted

- 2017 largest amount “under planting” with an estimated total of 26 acres
- Average plantings are 9 acres a year in APD between 2013-2019
- 178 years to reach amount talked about in BTF recommendation @ 9 acres per year rate

Questions and Answers

Q: Of those planted how many are “fully” active as a buffer?

Q: What is the width of them?

Q: What is the shoreline length – ft?

FPP background (Richard Martin)

- Original ordinance said Ag land & open space
- First years 1985-1996 the money was only spent on agriculture lands only
- 2019 \$4.5 million spent in Snoqualmie, Enumclaw & Green
- 2020 \$12,250 Mil
- ORIGINAL DEED – “OLD DEED” – does not have much flexibility.
- Approximately 75% of properties fall into the old deed.
 - o open space
 - o “non-tillable” definition was land removed from use as Agriculture, ie barns, roads
- 2009 New Deed: uses the state definition of incidental use which is more compatible with Ag uses.
- Addition > 20% (ie wetlands) does not exceed to Ag use

Added Restrictions

- No conversion to fish or wildlife habitat, unless it directly benefits Agriculture or is identified in the Baseline Documentation Report.
- “Typical” change – no more than 5% converted to non-tillable
- Deed can be amended but would at minimum need Council approval
- There are 500 farms (approximately = 6000 acres) that are in FPP in King County.
- All easements acquired with the intent to protect farmland.
- Can plant 25ft buffer for good Ag practice without it counting against the tillable allowance.

Questions and Answers

- Q: What happens if a farmer exceeds the 5% tillable allowance?
- A: There are only a few cases where the 5% is exceeded. In one case, the farmer had to remove non-tillable surfaces to return to the 5%.
- Q: Does this make buffers hard?
- A: Under the old deed the issues is almost insurmountable; there are internal conversations underway. All easements acquired to date were done with the idea of protecting farmland. Land owners are allowed to plant trees and after the trees get larger than 4" in diameter, land is permanently removed from ag. The Livestock Ordinance requires a 25' buffer with a farm plan. King County decided that a 25' buffer should not count against the non-tillable calculation. Without a farm plan, the buffer requirement is 50' according to the livestock ordinance.
- Q: If trees are present at the time of the deed and then cut, can that area be replanted without counting toward non-tillable?
- A: Yes

Beaver Management (Jennifer Vanderhoof)

- Jennifer Vanderhoof presented on the King County Beaver Working Group
- Beaver Working group has representatives from Department of Local Services and Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- The Workgroup formed as beavers are increasing in numbers in the landscape and the County wants to find and promote practical and effective solutions to coexist with beavers as they provide ecological benefits and are not going away.
- The workgroup is working on technical information about beavers ranging from management tools and current laws, policies and practices. These are the basis for education materials and technical documents.
- Currently the Beaver Working Group is working on fish passage issues, planning for beavers manual, good neighbor workshops and developing policy and program proposals.
- It is understood that planting more trees in the Snoqualmie APD will attract more beavers and cause issues such as creating localized wet areas.
- Possible solutions include trapping, fencing, pond levelers which all work to some degree but new solutions are needed.

Questions and Answers

- Q: What happens when a safety issues I posed by the beaver dams?
- A: Need to think more about this and continue to work with King County Stormwater Services who deal with more problematic beaver issues.
- Q: What about WDFW involvement in beaver management?
- A: Just about anything in the stream needs to go through the state. Then you have the county. The nexus between the two is the critical areas. Anticipating increased beavers with buffer plantings and need regulatory relief that includes the state so landowners aren't extraneous regulatory burden.
- Q: What is the timing on a pond leveler pilot study?
- A: May not have funding before next year – three or four years out for whole things as collecting more data. We will be learning more about beaver impacts and tools in the Snoqualmie – low gradient areas may mean levelers won't be very useful.
- Q: From a fisher standpoint we are concerned with fish getting through the pipe on a pond leveler. Steep gradients for fish to get though but have seen some that will work – lesser slope would probably work.
- A: Need to follow up with King County work on this
- Q: Are there plants that are less desirable to beavers?
- A: They'll eat anything – especially if many beavers are present.
- Q: Are there easier permitting paths – programmatic? No-permit?
- A: Programmatic permits are no longer being issued and King County Workgroup is exploring permitting paths for beaver related issues.

BTF Implementation Discussion:

Incentives / Compensation (I) *

- Use other grant sources as much as possible: subsidize CREP. Pay for land more than crop profits. State of MN (State WA also moving on this)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program – WID/SVPA – exploring this easement program to help identify and secure receiving areas for buffers
- Create a bond where the landowner gives up the property and gets a lump sum that doesn't have to worry when CREP goes away. Could include estimate of impact on productivity.
- Establish clearing house to understand incentive options, increase \$
- Full compensation for (shade) productivity because of buffer plantings.
- Tax cut for farmers who lease land
- Work for funding maintenance in perpetuity to relieve burden of maintenance from farmer
- CREP – 15 years, renew up to 30 years.
- King County could find ways to encourage and continue CREP buffers
- King County – FPP – 5% non-tillable is a severe limiter to allowing for these incentives, and consequently buffers, to be realized.
- Blue carbon – planting new buffers. Carbon credit.
- Market-based approach >> Adopt-a-Buffer focused on maintenance > next level
- Financial sells buffers
- Help the programs that exist to be more successful. (CREP)

Site specific for Flexibility (II)

- Maintenance can occur w/o removing buffer. One side of stream? Plants regenerate – chip and haul to allow for commodity realization
- Harvestable/grazable buffers – look at examples from the Snohomish Conservation District
- Would buffer averaging be allowed where total acreage is calculated based on recommendations and then spread out more appropriately for the property?
- How to plant when infrastructure cuts the buffer off from the watercourse? ie: levee road or highway
- Need to define the minimum buffer planting length/width at the December BTF meeting
- Farm visibility is important – could hedgerows on artificial/small watercourses be appropriate?
- Maintenance corridors

Site Specific Reg (III)

- Mitigation banking for farmers needs to be talked about and brought up through the Regulatory Task Force
- 5% limit through FPP will shut down buffer progress
- CREP minimum is 35', Expansion to 50' to count against the non-tillable would allow for CREP to be more usable for area farmers.
- Define what is tillable?
- Need to calculate the percentage of FPP impact on BTF recommendations in the Snoqualmie APD.
- Can this process be leveraged to help change at a political level?
- Cap & Trade Program as a way to encourage plantings.
- Look at potential of nexus of buffers / CAO flexibility – specific to watercourse (artificial, small)

Drainage (IV)

- Beavers (being discussed in the regulatory task force): 1) safety issue, 2) no permit, 3) BMPs over counter
- K.C. supports beaver solutions, have a readily available contractor to deal with the Beaver situation

- Possibly put artificial watercourses underground in drain tiles - underground

Buffer Composition (V)

Process (VI)

- Adaptive management plan. Determining how we might need to modify should include a mixed stakeholder group to assess success. (This is critical.) *
 - o Bi-annual review and changes
 - o Project delivery team
- We should establish targets for planting at the December meeting
- Tool for goals
- What is buffer task force success?

Communications

- We need to have "good neighbor communication".
- Establish a Project delivery team