

**AGENDA**  
**King County FFF 2.0**  
**Buffer Task Force Meeting #3**  
**Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**  
**Carnation Library, Carnation City Hall**

**Meeting Objectives:** Reinforce goals and objectives of the task force process. Update Task Force on progress of Science Synthesis and Agricultural Paper Progress. Revisit classification and prepare for February's meeting.

**Desired Outcome:** The Buffer Task Force convenes with the intent to create a variable buffer with programmatic tool in the Snoqualmie Valley that supports salmon health and farmer viability in a way in which both can thrive.

1:00 (20 minutes)	<b>Welcome and materials distribution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda</li> <li>• Consensus Reminders sheet</li> </ul>	Jenna
1:20 (20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• False start on classification system</li> <li>• Task Force Feedback on improving the process</li> </ul>	Jenna/Beth Group 1/TF
1:40	<b>10 MINUTE BREAK</b>	
1:50 (85 minutes)	<b>KC Updates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science Synthesis</li> <li>• Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Caucus check-in</li> </ul>	Josh  Beth  Caucus reps
3:15 (45 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural Paper Progress</li> <li>• Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Caucus check-in</li> </ul>	Beth  Caucus reps
4:00	<b>Wrap Up/ Adjourn</b> – Confirm next meeting	All

**Meeting Summary**  
**King County FFF 2.0**  
**Buffer Task Force Meeting #3**  
**Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
**1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**  
**Carnation Library**

**Task Force Members in Attendance:** Erin Ericson, Daryl Williams, Kurt Nelson, Chris laPointe, Elissa Ostergaard, Matt Baerwalde, Bruce Elliott, Preston Drew, and Lara Thomas, Wayne Gullstan, Steve VanEss

**Welcome and Material Distribution**

- Two new task force members were in attendance today.
- Ground rules and goals of the task force were reviewed. The task force members did not have any questions or concerns about the rules and goals.

**Classification System**

- At this time the smaller classification areas discussed at Meeting #2 (natural vs. artificial) will not be carried forward as group consensus was not reached.
- The following task force discussion followed:
  - Preston went to the Snoqualmie Valley preservation board meeting to discuss the classification system with affected farmers.
    - Using words like natural and manmade in these plans are red flags to farms. There are streams that have been labeled salmon streams that started as drainage ditches. Calling something like this natural can cause problems moving forward. Instead of using this classification it would be preferable to have a stream classification that notes the GPS location, physical characteristics, and any other facts known (when was channel altered).
      - Matt thinks include in-channel information and species occurrence would also be valuable
    - Elissa would like to have a more robust conversation about this once it is determined what characteristics of channels will be important for buffer widths.
    - Daryl feels that at this point the amount of modification that has occurred over past 100 years doesn't matter; what matters is how the fish is using stream.
  - Wayne doesn't want to see a landowner be caught having to maintain a larger buffer if they naturalize a manmade stream. While this is a voluntary program, there are concerns about it become regulatory guidance at a future date.
    - If you do something voluntarily will the county review and tie you to stricter regulations? How will this be viewed in the future.
    - Using ADAP – it is going to be difficult to apply buffers to natural vs. un natural.
  - Voluntary planting buffer applies to King Co. restoration and work on public lands. Variable buffer width is more for farmers.

- Buffer recommendations are not expected to apply to public land, they should do the best they can. Prescriptions are more for private landowners who are helping try to achieve the County objectives.
- WDFW does not need to sign-off on voluntary planting. They would have to sign-off on ADAP changes.
  - WDFW sits on the IOC committee and can support or not support recommendations from group.
- There are many ways to move forward with the information we have. Could look at classification or at what is on the landscape now (what is on either side of stream).
- Daryl – need a better feel for how going to use classification before we decide how to split stream channels into different classification
- Erin would like specific examples of how the classification system will be used
  - This roadmap, as developed by the task force, will let regulators decide what type of buffer is ideal by waterway. The land owner may not be able to give the full width, but it provides a consistent methodology to determine what the maximum is that should be done.

### **Chinook Salmon and Habitat Functions (Josh Presentation)**

- Josh gave a presentation on Chinook in the basin. Due to frequent flooding all floodplain tributaries have the potential to support Chinook. Riparian areas influence Chinook success. Riparian functions are described in synthesis document and how they support life histories
- **Q&A**
  - Why do only a small percentage of fish leave as yearlings?
    - Life history diversity is common in salmon. This is also expressed with spawning fish, which vary in age when they return. This life cycle variation helps continue to propagate the species
    - Increasing quantity/quality of habitat in freshwater could possibly result in an increase of yearlings.
  - Preston – if you start at Snoqualmie Falls and look at the ridges, they used to be clear-cut. That is no longer happening, that entire corridor is protected by the 1999 Fish and Forest Act 1999, which was implemented in 2004. The County has been actively buying properties. There are very high-quality streams and buffers, and thinning, not clear-cuts along highway. It is time to see some benefits from this. Dislike hearing reference to wholesale tree removal since that was a thing of the past.
    - Tree removal depressed fish populations when it happened. While there have been improvements and regulations, it takes time. We are addressing centuries of impacts. There is a time lag in creating habitat changes – natural processes take time.
    - Daryl - Old clear-cuts have turned into other land uses (Cities, industrial, etc.) that have had direct impacts on fish. Buffers help address water quality. There are a lot of factors that affect salmon recovery, we are only talking about one small piece here.
    - Preston doesn't like the massive tree removal statement. At. All.
  - Erin – How many salmon are in the Snoqualmie APE, what is the impact of what's happening in Puget sound?

- Need to give fish the best advantage we can in freshwater to enter the ocean. The size they are entering the ocean is one of the biggest factors in their surviving to return.
- Wayne - No spawning in creeks?
  - They prefer larger substrate from mainstem and larger tributaries. Juveniles can use this area though

### **Review of Riparian Buffer Document**

- Document provides the science basis for the FFF group to tease out what is important to make recommendations. Functions were selected because they are applicable and there is supporting literature. If you feel something was missed please let Beth know.
- Focus on questions and feedback from taskforce members. Others can leave a written comment that may be addressed now or possibly later
- Section 3 provides a breakdown of individual functions. This is where the buffer task force can tweak what has been identified as important. Appendix shows all buffer widths identified in the literature review.
  - Discussion section brings it back to why this function is important in the Snoqualmie
- Initial Thoughts of Task Force
  - Kurt – who prepared this synthesis?
    - Josh, Mike, Collin, and Beth prepared the document. The King Co. Librarian also helped obtain literature. The authors feel they captured all the references but would like feedback from the group if there is additional information that should be included.
  - Wayne – 150’ was based on best science, but I heard it is suspicious. Would be useful to state the validity of the previous buffer width has been questioned.
    - Daryl – much of literature used is studies of forested areas. These do not necessarily equate well to low lands, low slope. But show that if you took in all benefits of buffers to fish to get 100% protection you need 1-2 tree heights (conifer tree). Buffer widths have been negotiated to try and meet a goal. Understood we couldn’t get 100% of habitat back, so set goal of 80%. If you look at plan, implementation of all of these would help meet 80%. The 150’ buffer won’t get 100% habitat protection of fish, this was negotiated to a narrower width. What we are doing here is trying to negotiate something everyone can live with.
  - Preston - Skagit Co. (Sarah Hempel (sp?) is author) study said 35’ buffer is all that is needed.
    - This paper was evaluated and included in the appendix range.
    - Preston – so a 300’-35’ buffer is the range of suggested options?
      - Josh – the document aims to look at functions and buffer characteristics by riparian area type. Larger buffers for microclimates, LWD, etc. Smaller buffers for nutrients, etc.
  - Erin – have you looked at literature from other areas that are implementing buffer width work? Looked into it on own and saw there are other places doing this (focused on water quality). Would be good to include these types of papers in synthesis.

- Erin - May be able to get site specific – practices on farms (e.g., nutrients, pesticides, etc.) may require certain buffers on one farm and not another. Variable planning tool is a checklist of farm practices and how that interacts with waterway. Based on what is going on at farm that will influence protection required at waterway for specific resource concerns.
- Collin - Did review some papers, they were focused on implementation. They are waiting for the next phase – how do you create and implement that program.
- Beth – did review papers that are looking at how to do variable to encourage folks to participate in voluntary plantings. These papers didn't really get at functions, more implementation of working with stakeholders.
- Erin – would like to see site specificity included as it related to water quality.
- Josh – appendix has lots of information that would help inform planning tools.
- Wayne – Figure 4 LWD summarizes benefit improvements. Do other attributes have similar graphics?
  - Josh – Yes, they were reported for majority of them. However, to limit the pages of the document not all figures were included. All numbers showing widths and associated function are captured in the appendix.
  - Wayne really likes the Figure 4 graphic and would love to have one for each function, if possible.
- Elissa
  - Setting the context in the introduction is important. Why is the local food initiative not mentioned – this is a big source of tension and needs to be addressed.
  - State upfront we are not trying to change Snohomish basin salmon goals. Seems the salmon plan goals look at 100%, not at lesser percent. Also, didn't seem where buffers are limited. Would be useful to include charts that depict this to show potential impacts.
  - Interested in not just talking about buffer width but also other aspects of buffers that may contribute or take away from functions (types of plants, how tall, how dense is canopy, how old, etc.). Would be good to know for each function if other aspects of condition of buffer also affect this function. So, if there is going to be a narrower buffer is there something that can be done to maximize benefits.
    - Collin/Josh – this is addressed as possible. If information was found that shows how width, height, etc. influence other functions it was included
    - Elissa – it is mentioned but want more specifics
    - Elissa to send some additional sources to be considered for inclusion
- Kurt – seems there are about 2,400 acres at issue in AEP. What can't we focus on this acreage? Each one of those farms/parcels might need a site-specific action to address location, how farm works, etc.
- Laura – no single buffer width is answer throughout the APE. Recommendations need to be made while understanding that policy makers do not make decisions based on science. Really liked the shade and microclimate section and graph as to what buffer looked like.

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- Josh – need to ID what function get out of watercourse. If can start there, as we add more information to it will have fundamental understanding that in xx watercourse these functions are important.
- Josh Monaghan – classification systems will play out what a given consensus agreement is over the landscape over a long period of time. The math doesn't have to be perfect but gives some long-term planning.
- Colin –People will need to accept the recommendations made and understand how they are ground in science.
- Matt – can any of this play into flexibility for farmland preservation pans (FPP easements from the 1970's)?
- Erin – it is important to be informed about what landowners are willing to accept.
  - Beth - CWM grant programs gives a lot of money for smaller buffer planting on private property. Some landowners want large buffers, and this can become an issue because it takes agriculture out of production. Need to find a balance and have the process be open and transparent.
  - Chris – some farmers are interested in more biodiversity in buffers as opposed to working land to river. Need to keep in mind meeting the landowners where they are. Avoid doing a ton of work prior to having landowner buy in.
  - Colin – FFF Phase 1 had a lot of recommendations that are not currently being addressed. They are a follow-up to the buffer width we are currently working on.
  - Beth – We're looking at maximum recommendations. If farmer only agrees to plant less than that, then that is the acreage that will be planted. Smaller buffer plantings will likely happen with local money.
  - Daryl – if willing to accept any width buffer what it the point of what we are doing?
    - Beth – variable width and some will be smaller than 150' in salmon plan
- Group needs to start thinking about what functions they are expecting from watercourses in this area.
- Caucuses to provide input at next meeting.

### **Agricultural Paper Progress (Melissa B)**

- Different than synthesis of science, captures comments and opinions from landowners when folks go out to plan riparian buffers on landscape. It is as relevant as possible to the Snoqualmie Valley.
- Let Beth know if ideas are not captured.
- **Q&A**
  - Kurt – Found the results of the survey interesting. Was this broader with questions not captured – was loss of farmable land a question?
    - Melissa- conservation district did this survey. All questions asked are represented in the table. Didn't summarize write-in answers in detail.
  - Erin – SPCA board comment: general feeling/perspective of the FFF body of work is that farmers are left feeling that while they are stewards of the land, this process/documentation doesn't represent how much they love the land and how hard they try. It is important of the FFF to try and understand that feeling. Farmers want to do the best they can, it is things like buffer maintenance that make them feel like all this is on them. Need to highlight that farmers are doing a really good job – capture their efforts, love, and stewardship of land.
  - Laura
    - Liked info on beaver.
    - Section cash crop issue in shade was good but suggest using an example other than sugar beets, farming in this area is not cash crop type farming.
    - Make sure that shade section relates to Snoqualmie valley.
    - Hydrologic impacts from buffers will be important to farmers. As change hydrology land could become less productive. Need to look at loss to farmers and fish as well.
  - Preston – suggest providing an economic incentive to farmers to have larger buffers. Goal to have more fish in river. Pick high priority candidate and develop stream – buffers and instream work, go so far as planting fish. Pay landowner for land more than they can make farming. Have landowner be part of monitoring program and report on changes in fish population. Do this one stream at a time on a priority basis. Once word gets out to farmers, they are making money by creating fish habitat they will become interested in this type of development.
    - Wayne – what is the cost benefit of wider buffers in areas where most valuable land is no longer in ag production?
    - Preston – incentivize farmer to pay for habitat they have and make them want to sign-up
    - Cynthia – it is not just about creating a deal with landowners, also protecting ag resource for public for future. Understand how we protect resource as whole and every acre does matter.
  - Elissa – As this process progresses it would be good to have the agricultural community quantify the number of farms needed in the area to keep farming alive. Understanding tradeoffs is important. Trying to balance of salmon recovery and farming in King County.

- All farmers see plenty of negatives, some were willing to articulate positives. Almost all positives, it doesn't have to be on waterway (pollinator habitat, etc.). Larger buffers add challenge.
- KCD operators are already willing to work with government agency and have a conservation ethic – need to take numbers in survey with a grain of salt
- There are several people working land that do value salmon recovery. In FFF agreement recognize the need for some farmland to be used for salmon recovery. There really isn't a farm strategic plan. In the FFF agreement it would be good to come to what the trade off is. It is not an us vs. them. Most landowners are willing to do a lot for conservation, need to figure out balance of holding farmland for future generations.
- Steve – mitigation is different than voluntary planting. Mitigation is being addressed in regulatory task force.
- Laura – need idea of what acreage numbers look like in APE (landscape watershed approach, other?)
- Taking comments on both papers until 12/21 – send to Beth. Open to have additional meetings or coffee dates to have further discussion
- Elissa is concerned about what needs to be covered to finish plan.
  - Beth – honoring input from group

### Next Steps

- Set-up mid-January WebEx meeting to set February agenda
  - Define Baseline
- **Next in-person meeting February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019**
- Topics/Items of interest:
  - Get feedback from task force in January to determine how to address classification during the February meeting. Include an overview of how classification system will be used.
  - Preston – follow-up conversation re: Snoqualmie Valley preservation board meeting to discuss the classification system with affected farmers.
  - Presentation of ADAP classification
  - Elissa – GIS exercise where can see streams, buffers, acres impacted, salmon plan goals, overlay of FPP easements.
    - Per Beth, this will likely have to be maps as GIS files are huge and not conducive to travel. Or it could be an interim webinar
  - Talk about 100' grant buffer issue, tribal perspective on why it is there.
    - Details on grant requirements related to buffers and are they negotiable?
    - Who is paying for buffer planting?
  - Wayne would like charts like Figure 4 LWD (science synthesis) for all functions. KC may be able to produce them by the end of January