

DRAFT: Buffer Task Force: Objectives, Priority Issues, Schedule, Deliverables

Objectives

The principal objective of the Buffer Task Force is to *provide the foundation and guidance for a scientifically credible, context-sensitive, locally derived riparian buffer implementation strategy identified by the Fish, Farm and Flood (FFF) committee in their 2016 agreement*. The Task Force work is further defined by a Washington State Department of Wildlife (WDFW) grant that set forward three deliverables:

1. Literature review of the best available science (BAS) for agricultural riparian areas
2. Write an agriculture riparian issue paper in the form of technical memorandum on agricultural benefits and challenges of riparian buffer plantings in the agricultural areas of King County.
3. Develop a decision tool for planting riparian buffers on agricultural lands in the Snoqualmie Valley.

The grant will sunset December 2019, unless an extension is requested and granted.

Introduction

The FFF Advisory Committee recognized the importance of salmon recovery efforts, a vibrant agricultural economy supported by protecting agricultural soils in the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District (APD), and the importance of protecting public and private assets in flood prone areas. To address inherent conflicts between these interests, the Advisory Committee recommended a suite of near term actions including the creation of three task forces. The policy issues and recommendations outlined in the Snoqualmie FFF agreement are not intended to be applied broadly in other APDs, though many principles may be readily transferable.

In King County's ongoing Snoqualmie Fish, Farm Flood initiative, the potential of riparian restoration actions to possibly displace hundreds or even thousands of acres of agricultural land has raised questions about the ability to implement restoration in a way that supports salmon recovery, without cumulatively resulting in a dramatic reduction in the available acres for growing food or otherwise damaging agricultural productivity. The concern about the loss of farmland is fueled in part by the lack of a credible, science-based approach that is more nuanced than "one size fits all" 100 or 150 foot buffers on all salmonid streams. Absent a plan that is crafted with the local context in mind, meaningful progress toward the overall riparian restoration goals in the Salmon Plan and Ecology's TMDLs seems unlikely. Reaching agreement among the tribes, farmers, regulators, and stakeholders (such as local cities and the environmental community) in the development of a watershed-specific riparian management plan will be critical to task force success.

Advisory Committee Action Recommendations

The FFF Agreement provided a set of Recommendations (Appendices II & III, FFF Transmittal), some of which guide the work of the Buffer Task Force. The FFF Agreement states that completion of the Buffer Task Force work is important to creating a path forward to determine buffers that are ecologically robust and provide landowner flexibility. This is formalized in Recommendation **Fish 6**.

Fish 6: Support the Buffer Task Force and work with task force participants to Create a Buffer Implementation Plan as a subsequent task.

The completion of the Buffer Task Force work is important to creating a path forward to determine buffers that are ecologically robust and provide landowners flexibility.

Task Force Scope and Tasks

The FFF Committee recommendations lead directly to the development of a Near-Term Action that received funding through the Snohomish Basin Local Integrating Organization. The funding is through a grant administered by Washington State Department of Wildlife. The grant includes the majority of tasks set forward by the FFF Committee recommendations. The (updated) tasks from the Scope of Work are:

Task 1. Project Development

Task 1.1 – Detailed project plan and timeline

May 2018. The deliverable is a Gant chart showing the timeline for the work to be done in this grant. It is attached to this document

Task 1.2 – Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Development

April 2018. The QAPP states how the Riparian Buffer Decision Tool will be constructed and what map layers and model pieces will be used to do that work.

Task 1.3 – Communications Plan and Responsibility Assignment Matrix

June 2018 – This document

Task 2. Project Management

Task 2.1 – Project Factsheet

April 2018. A summary factsheet about the project that is used by the funding agency to describe the work to be done by this grant.

Task 2.2 – Quarterly progress reports

Quarterly financial and progress reporting done for granting agency. Will occur 7 times throughout this grant.

Task 2.3 – Final report including final FEATS and updated factsheet

This is the final financial and progress reports explaining what was accomplished and the money that was spent.

Task 3. Riparian Report, Agriculture Issue Paper and Development of Snoqualmie Agriculture Riparian Decision Tool

Task 3.1 – Literature Review of Best Available Science (BAS) For Agricultural Riparian Areas

August 2018. Buffer Task Force Technical Team assembles a literature review of BAS pertaining specifically to the ecological functions provided by buffers in agriculture areas. Understanding the BAS is a critical starting point to inform the appropriate buffer guidance including widths, density, height, and composition for various stream sizes and land uses. This effort will be summarized in an annotated bibliography, with an executive summary which will summarize the pertinent findings and serve as the scientific foundation for the Decision Tool.

Task 3.2 – Agriculture Riparian Issue Paper

October 2018. The Technical Team will write an issue paper in the form of a technical memorandum on the agricultural benefits and challenges of buffer plantings in the agricultural areas of King County. The paper will help frame the need for a Decision Tool that integrates context-specific attributes of buffers in agricultural areas into the Decision Tool.

Task 3.3 – Develop Snoqualmie Agriculture Riparian Decision Tool

December 2019. The Technical Team will develop a usable and well-documented Decision Tool that integrates the BAS document, issues paper and Task Force guidance for local context and other various on-the-ground practicalities to develop multiple buffer target conditions for prioritized stream reaches in the Snoqualmie APD. The Technical Team will present to and work with the Task Force to refine the Decision Tool and gain better understanding of the local context and constraints that pertain to buffers in the Snoqualmie APD.

Task 3.4 – Buffer Task Force agendas, summaries and outcomes for each meeting

Task 4. Broader Impacts and Communication

Task 4.1 – Presentation materials for up to 3 presentations and 1 recorded presentation to be made available on Habitat SI website (pugetsoundestuary.wa.gov)

December 2019. Presentation for the Granting Agency explaining this work

Task 4.2 – Project materials, draft, and final products available online

November 2019. All deliverables for this work will be available online.

Task Force Structure

The Buffer Task Force is part of the larger Farm, Fish, Flood 2.0 (FFF 2.0) effort lead by King County. The Task Force works within the structure designed for FFF 2.0. Description of the roles and responsibilities across the larger FFF 2.0 is attached at the end of the document.

The Task force is comprised of three main bodies – the Technical Team, The Task Force and Subject Matter Experts. All groups have members that represent each caucus (farm, fish and flood) and will work directly with the Task Force Coordinator as well as their caucus chair.

Internal Technical Team

The task force will have an internal team to work on producing deliverables for Buffer Task Force review.

Members include:

Beth leDoux	King County
Josh Kubo	King County Science and Technical
Andrew Miller	King County Science and Technical
Kollin Higgins	King County Science and Technical
Ted Sullivan	King County Agriculture
Patrice Barrentine	King County Agriculture
Eric Beach	King County Agriculture
Josh Monaghan	King Conservation District

Buffer Task Force

The advisory Task Force will review the BAS and Riparian Buffers on Agriculture Landscape issue paper. They will actively work on creating a decision tool using the two documents (BAS/Agriculture Issue Paper) as a basis for creating the tool that will help demonstrate who to adjust buffer widths in the Snoqualmie Valley that make ecological and landscape sense.

Members include:

Elissa Ostergaard	Snoqualmie Watershed Forum
Daryl Williams/Kurt Nelson	Tulalip Tribes
Matt Baerwalde	Snoqualmie Tribe
Chris LaPointe	Stewardship Partners
Erin Erickson	Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District
Preston Drew	CAPR
Steve VanEss	Snoqualmie Valley Resident
Bruce Elliott	King County Agriculture Commission
Lara Thomas	City of Duvall Planning Director

Subject Matter Experts



Subject Matter Experts will be in the audience and will help provide points of clarification, technical expertise and fill in the conversation to ensure robust discussion.

Cindy Dittbrenner	Snohomish Conservation District
Colin Hume	Department of Ecology
Ralph Svrjcek	Department of Ecology
Appointee from Brendon Brokes	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Teresa Lewis	King County Rivers Team
Micah Wait	Wild Fish Conservancy

Schedule

The Buffer Task Force will have a kick-off meeting June 20, 2019. Meetings will happen on an every month basis, starting in Fall of 2018. The Task Force is set to sunset in December 2019

Table 1 **Provisional** Schedule for addressing Priority Issues. Task Force to discuss 6/20/2018

Date	Topic
June 20	Kick off
Oct 2018	Discuss BAS/Agricultural Issue Paper
Dec 2018	Bring forward context setting topics – salmon habitat, agriculture, model work previously done –
Feb 2019	
April 2019	
June 2019	Take context setting discussion and put it on maps for discussion
August 2019	
Oct 2019	
Nov 2019	
Dec 2019	Project Complete/Wrap up

Decision Process

6/03/2018

Task Forces members are asked to approach their deliberations as collaborative problem solvers, seeking to produce consensus proposals that address the practical needs and interests of all caucuses (caucuses are the groups representing the three parties – Farm, Fish, Flood). The group will build understanding of the participants' values and interests related to the issue; and develop an understanding of essential information.

The FFF 2.0 Implementation Oversight Committee discussed appropriate decision processes in a Caucus chair meeting on 2/26/18. The Committee agreed that Task Force(s);

- a. Should have consistent processes
- b. Ideally have at least one representative from each caucus
- c. Equal numbers of representatives from each caucus was not necessary
- d. Strive for consensus, but minority reporting may be necessary if unable to reach agreement.
 - a. Consensus is defined as, at a minimum, “no objections” or as being able to “live with” an outcome,
 - b. One person or entity may not prevent the larger group from achieving agreement. When agreement is not possible, document different perspectives.

Decision Model

The Task Force objectives are to create a decision tool for riparian planting at variable widths in the Snoqualmie APD that can display the options on a map and allow for tabulation of overall amount of area in the APD that could be replanted over the next 30 to 50 years. The form of the decision model has not been set yet and may range from a relatively simple flow chart to a more complex Ecosystem Management Decision System (EMDS) modeling approach.

Ground Rules

Collaborative problem solving is most successful when parties agree that their perspectives have been heard and considered in a meaningful way, that other participants have made every effort to address their interests in any final proposals, and that the final proposals accurately characterize any outstanding differences.

The Buffer Task Force will function under a set of ground rules. These rules are meant to support reaching the following desired outcome: *The Buffer Task Force 2.0 convenes with the intent to create a variable buffer width programmatic tool in the Snoqualmie Valley that supports salmon health and farmer viability in a way in which both can thrive.*

The purpose of developing these ground rules is to assist us in effectively working together toward the development of the tool. Ground rules are a set of agreements that help to facilitate communication and commitment to the process of collectively developing the plan. They make explicit the common expectations of participating to reach the following process goal: *The Buffer Task Force will strive for consensus as defined as a decision that allows each participant to say “The group I represent can live with the decision and accept it, regardless of whether it is exactly what we want”*

Ground Rules for Meeting Procedures:

1. Attendance is an important part of learning and the collaborative process. It is the member's responsibility

to be fully informed of the discussions of missed meetings.

2. Timeliness: All BTF members are expected to be on time and be available for the full meeting period. Meetings will start promptly.
3. Note keeping will be the responsibility of the facilitation team and the facilitator and meeting notes will be provided to BTF members within 1 week of the meeting.
4. Meetings will be task oriented and specific agendas will be provided one week in advance of each meeting and followed.
5. No cell phones, computers, or PDAs are to be used during the meetings unless expressly determined as needed for task force business or emergency purposes BEFORE the start of the meeting.
6. Alternate: an alternate of a representative caucus will be identified for every participant and will assume the responsibilities of the interest caucus representative in the event that they are unavailable to attend. It is the responsibility of the BTF member and alternate to keep each other informed.
7. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) will also be in attendance. They are present to provide context clarification, technical expertise and provide input to help encourage a more robust discussion.
8. Material for each meeting will only be presented once. It is the responsibility of each BTF member to have an alternate present if they cannot attend a meeting.
9. Following each meeting the facilitator will be available for 1 hour for additional discussion, clarification, or comments.
10. Agenda input for the following meeting may be provided to the facilitator in writing, up to two weeks prior to the next meeting.
11. The Public may attend meetings as observers. Meetings will focus on the task force members, but the facilitator may welcome comments or questions from the public as appropriate.
12. Outside information will be provided to support the planning process as needed. The agenda will identify all speakers and guest participants for each meeting.
13. Any BTF member may leave the process at any time. They will need to alert their caucus chair of their departure.
14. There will be a meeting reflection survey sheet at the end of each meeting, to review effectiveness of process and get feedback. Questionnaire
 - a. What did we do well?
 - b. What do we want to keep doing?
 - c. What do we want to change?
 - d. Did we work as effectively as we might have hoped?

Ground Rules for Meeting/Group Discussion:

1. Equal time: All members will respect the time, concerns and interests of others, whether or not they agree with them.

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2. Represent your group, agency or organization, not yourself.
3. Individuals participating on behalf of their represented organization are responsible to take ideas and questions back to their respective organizations before they can commit on their behalf.
4. Focus on issues and interests not people and positions.
5. Treat one another with respect: personal insults, attacks, harassment, or profanity are not acceptable.
6. Make constructive comments that help the process move forward.
7. Come to every meeting prepared to problem-solve the issues of others, as well as your own.
8. Some discussions may be sensitive and the Task Force should be a forum in which new ideas can be tested and proposed. Trust and discretion are imperative.
9. Where real or perceived differences exist, work to clarify them and/or respect others' right to disagree.
10. Ask questions from an underlying sense of curiosity and collaboration, not a hidden agenda.
11. Review materials will be moved through point by point during each meeting with a short period for comment and/or clarification.
12. Consensus: The Advisory Committee will strive to make decisions by consensus. The facilitator will periodically assess whether there is consensus for a decision. At that time:
 - a. All efforts will be made within a period not to exceed two (2) meetings, to make decisions by consensus.
 - b. If consensus is not reached, such will be noted.
 - c. Consensus is a desired goal but not a requirement. If consensus cannot be reached, the issues preventing consensus will be elevated to the FFF 2.0 Implementation Committee for resolution. Any decision will made by the Implementation Committee will used as the point to move forward in the BTF.

Ground Rules for work between meetings:

1. The facilitation team will distribute materials for future meetings that must be reviewed for the following meeting. These are intended to bring the group quickly to key issues or discussions, and then decisions, as appropriate.
2. Written materials related directly to the BTF may also be distributed. There will be a 1-2 week review for these materials.

**FFF 2.0 (Implementation Phase)
Structure and Responsibilities
June 4, 2018**

Implementation of the work outlined in the June 2017 FFF agreement will be coordinated by an Implementation Oversight Committee with several of the more complex issues addressed through three focused task forces. Individual actions that fall outside the spheres of responsibility for the task forces will be addressed primarily by technical staff as part of their annual work plans. The Implementation Oversight Committee will have balanced representation from each of the three caucus groups and key agencies. Task forces and action teams will be composed of technical experts best positioned to achieve tangible progress on the respective work plans; however, there will not be a requirement for balanced representation on those work teams. County staff and contractors will support and coordinate work of the Implementation Oversight Committee and task forces. The following reflects initial understanding of roles and responsibilities for the Implementation Oversight Committee, task forces and action teams. We expect this document to be modified over time as the Implementation Oversight Committee engages in this important body of work.

Implementation Oversight Committee

- Composition
 - Maximum of 15 members; recommended by key partners and appointed by DNRP Director.
 - Equal representation from the Fish and Farm caucuses is required; Flood representation will likely be less than Fish and Farm
 - Ex-officio members from DNRP, WDFW, Ecology and WSDA; may choose to caucus with one of the three caucus groups
 - Members may send a proxy if scheduling conflicts prohibit their attendance at meetings; however, proxies should be well-versed in FFF to ensure they are able to contribute to discussions and will be eligible to vote
 - Committee work supported by facilitator (contracted by King County).
 - DNRP will assign a staff liaison to each caucus to assist with caucus meetings and provide needed data and reports
- Responsibilities
 - All appointed members have voting rights (excludes ex-officio members) and the goal is for unanimous decisions although minority opinions will be shared
 - Members are expected to understand and communicate needs/concerns of their communities/stakeholders, whether in their role as a representative of a specific organization or as an individual
 - Review and approve initial work plans for Task Forces and Actions Teams
 - Review progress of task forces and individual action teams and assess progress against benchmarks/milestones
 - Help to resolve barriers to completing task force scopes of work or individual recommendations and help to secure support and funding to complete priority actions
 - Recommend “mid-course” corrections in Task Force and action priorities to DNRP Director, if necessary
 - Approve annual progress report to DNRP Director (drafted by 2.0 Coordinator); highlight any elements of concern or needed intervention by DNRP Director/Executive
- Meeting Frequency
 - Initial meeting January 2018
 - Quarterly progress review meetings (schedule to be determined)
 - Engagement anticipated through end of 2020

Caucus Chairs

- Composition
 - One member from Implementation Oversight Committee selected by each caucus group.
- Responsibilities
 - Work with Facilitator and Coordinator to develop agendas for quarterly Implementation Committee meetings
 - Rotate responsibility for chairing IOC quarterly meetings
 - Communicate with caucus members to pass along FFF information and to receive reports about progress, or the lack thereof; may require separate caucus meetings
 - Chairs are responsible for ensuring full caucus participation in the Implementation Oversight Committee. If needed, caucus liaison can assist with outreach to caucus members
 - Report caucus concerns and recommendations at each Implementation Oversight Committee meeting
- Meeting Frequency
 - Meet approximately 4 weeks prior to quarterly Implementation Oversight Committee meeting to discuss potential agenda items

Caucus Groups

- Composition
 - Members of Implementation Oversight Committee and task forces
 - At the discretion of Caucus Chairs, Representatives of fish, farm or flood stakeholder groups who are not formal members of the Implementation Oversight Committee may caucus with IOC caucus members
 - DNRP has assigned a staff liaison to each of the caucus groups
- Responsibilities
 - If a problem or challenge is identified, Caucus Groups will recommend actions to ensure work plans can be achieved
 - Members will communicate questions/concerns/issues with appropriate Task Force Coordinator and/or FFF Coordinator. If concerns cannot be addressed satisfactorily, Caucus Chairs may raise those issues during regular meetings of the IOC
 - DNRP staff liaison will support Caucus Groups as necessary, including facilitating meetings and providing necessary data and documents
- Meeting Frequency
 - As needed to address caucus issues but at a minimum 1 week prior to Caucus Chair meetings to discuss needed agenda items for quarterly Implementation Oversight Committee meeting

Caucus Liaison

- Composition
 - One member of DNRP technical staff appointed by WLR Director/Assistant Director
- Responsibilities
 - Support co-chairs as needed
 - Provide leadership, as necessary, to ensure effective caucus contributions to FFF activities but do not lead the work of caucus groups
 - Provide requested documents to Co-chairs and caucus groups
 - Communicate work of caucus groups, barriers to progress and needed resources to FFF Coordinator
 - Caucus Liaison may participate in Caucus Group meetings as requested by Caucus Chair

Task Forces (Regulatory, Riparian Buffer, Strategic Plan)

- Composition
 - Ideally at least one representative from each caucus on each task force
 - Additional members with broad understanding of the issues
 - Ad-hoc technical experts called upon to address specific issues
 - Supported by Task Force Coordinator (technical expert from DNRP or contractor)
- Responsibilities
 - Develop and track progress on work plan
 - Identify personnel and other resources to accomplish tasks
 - Accomplish tasks identified in approved work plans
 - Task Force Coordinators will report progress to Implementation Oversight Committee and request approval for significant departure from work plans, if necessary
 - Strive to achieve consensus, but Caucus Co-chairs may present minority reports to the Implementation Oversight Committee if unable to reach agreement
- Meeting Frequency
 - Initial meeting February 2018
 - Subsequent meetings as needed (to be determined by task forces)
 - Annual meeting to review progress in November of each year

Task Force Coordinator

- Composition
 - DNRP technical staff appointed by WLR Director/Assistant Director
- Responsibilities
 - Develop meeting agendas, in consultation with Task Force members, and facilitate meetings
 - Provide necessary coordination, support and leadership for task force work but does not lead the work of the Task Force
 - Frequent (monthly?) reporting on Task Force progress to FFF Coordinator who will share any significant challenges with FFF Coordination Team
 - Identify needs and pursue funding to accomplish Task Force work plans
 - Draft reports and other documents that result from work of task forces and circulate draft documents among appropriate DNRP technical staff prior to delivery to IOC

Actions Teams (as needed; work items not included within Task Force work plans)

- Composition
 - Broad spectrum of technical experts from Tribes, agencies, partners and DNRP
 - One person/organization will assume responsibility for implementation of action strategies
- Responsibilities
 - Develop work plans to complete actions not incorporated into task force work plans (not all actions will require formal work plans)
 - Incorporate actions into annual work plans
 - Identify issues that warrant engagement by Implementation Committee.
- Meeting Frequency
 - As needed

FFF Coordination Team

- Composition
 - Overall program support provided by DNRP steering committee (John Taylor, Tamie Kellogg, Joan Lee, Janne Kaje, Richard Martin)
 - Work supported by WLRD technical and administrative staff
- Responsibilities
 - Regularly review progress of various FFF components and make necessary decisions to remove barriers to progress and communication
 - Provide necessary staff to support work of the Implementation Committee, task forces and caucus groups
 - Work with FFF 2.0 Facilitator to coordinate quarterly Implementation Committee and caucus group meetings
 - Report overall FFF progress to WLRD and DNRP directors
 - Work with DNRP Section and Unit leaders to manage budgets and make necessary adjustments in staff allocation and funding to ensure adequate DNRP capacity
 - Identify needs and pursue funding to support implementation of FFF work plans

FFF Coordinator

- Assigned by WLR Director/Assistant Director
- Responsibilities
 - Track progress of task forces and individual action teams and relay challenges and major concerns to FFF Coordination Team
 - Coordinate with Facilitator to schedule and host meetings of Implementation Oversight Committee, co-chairs and other meetings, as needed
 - Manage calendar of all FFF team meetings
 - Develop reporting tools (e.g., dashboard) to easily track task progress and provide ready access to reporting tools for Implementation Committee members and other FFF 2.0 personnel
 - Manage EasyProjects to enable FFF participants to track task force and action team progress and communicate with FFF participants
 - Lead development of reports and other documents that result from work of Implementation Committee
 - Provide quarterly reports on action item progress to Implementation Oversight Committee
 - Update FFF website to ensure broader community is kept informed of FFF progress

Facilitator

- Responsibilities
 - Collaborate with Co-chairs to develop agendas (conference calls)
 - Facilitate regular meetings of Implementation Committee
 - Provide guidance on priority setting and conflict resolution
 - Document meetings
 - Review reports and other documents that result from work of Implementation Committee and task forces

DNRP Internal Communication Group

- Composition
 - FFF Coordination Team, Task Force Coordinators, Caucus Liaisons.

- Responsibilities
 - Ensure that FFF work and decisions is transmitted up and down organizational structure
 - In between scheduled meetings, reach out to FFF Coordinator if there are perceived barriers to communication or issues that need to be raised with FFF Coordination Team
 - WLR Director/Assistant Director will determine appropriate schedule and format for reporting FFF activities to DNRP Director
- Meeting Frequency
 - Conference call or in-person meeting prior to quarterly Implementation Oversight Committee meetings to review agenda drafted by Co-chairs and other meeting documents
 - Debrief after each Implementation Oversight Committee quarterly meeting
 - FFF Coordinator responsible for scheduling meetings and ensuring that all relevant FFF communications are shared with full Internal Communication Group

