**WRIA 15 PROJECT WORKGROUP MEETING NOTES**

November 18, 2019

Attendees:

Paul Pickett – Squaxin Island Tribe

Nam Siu- WDFW

Brittney Gordon - WDFW

Joel Purdy – Kitsap PUD

Sam Phillips – Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe

Dave Nash – Kitsap County

Austin Jennings– Pierce County

Nate Daniel – Great Peninsula Conservancy

Alison O’Sullivan– Suquamish Tribe

Jon Turk – Aspect Consulting/Skokomish Tribe

Stacy Vynne – Ecology

Bob Montgomery – Anchor QEA

Jimmy Kralj - ESA

**Check in on Projects**

* Comments from Squaxin
  + Difficulty in identifying projects that will be shovel ready when the plan is done.
  + Proposal to group projects by type and start looking into project feasibility.
    - The plans will likely contain projects at all different stages and that enough of these projects will be able to move forward to reach NEB.
    - Important to share project stage/feasibility when brainstorming project ideas.
* Will the list of projects included in the plan remain there for the 20-year planning period? How will projects be updated to reflect new information and conditions?
  + The plans can include an adaptive management component to continually add and update projects.
  + The committee can decide what an adaptive management component will look like.
    - Proposal for yearly check-ins related to adaptive management.
* Hydrology and hydrogeology technical workshop/information sharing. This is an optional workshop for the technical workgroup and other members of the committee.
  + This information can be used to guide the placement of projects.
  + Scheduled for December 11th, likely at Bremerton Public Works.
* Request for a statewide MAR (managed aquifer recharge) webinar
  + An opportunity to discuss the specifics behind these project and review past project examples.
  + Pacific Groundwater Group is working to develop areas in WRIA 15 that would be most suitable for MAR projects.
    - Some of the technical questions can be covered in the hydrology and hydrogeology webinar.
  + Stacy will discuss with PGG and John Covert to set up a presentation.
  + We will want to focus on upland sites and natural MAR (wetland and off/side channel habitat areas to hold water).
  + Clarification to not use wetlands for storm water storage.
* Updates from subgroups and project ideas
  + Ecology presented to the Watershed Leads (staff from Puget Sound Salmon Recovery lead entities) about the planning process and to discuss how lead entity staff are engaging with these planning committees.
    - WDFW had a planning meeting with West Sound Salmon Enhancement Group and identified several projects that might benefit streamflow.
      * There is a bit of uncertainty around how the projects could receive support from this grant program, and are actively pursuing other funding opportunities.
      * Expectation of the project list we develop is that all of the projects won’t be exclusively funded through the streamflow recovery grant program.
    - Question about relationship between salmon recovery projects included in the streamflow recovery process?
      * Some see concerns about using salmon projects from salmon recovery plans in this process.
      * Request from WDFW for the Puget Sound Partnership to issue a formal decision about this issue.
      * SRFB funding concerns, important to be conscious of this as we work through the planning process. We don’t want streamflow projects to draw away resources from SRFB, PSAR, ESRP or other dedicated salmon recovery funding sources.
    - Some projects can be funded and supported by multiple different grant programs.

**Project Identification and Identification**

* Handout from Great Peninsula Conservancy with project ideas.
  + Most of these projects are acquisitions, and unsure about how to incorporate restoration components into these.
  + REPI (Readiness Environmental Protection Integration, Navy program) to buy land around the base as a buffer to support readiness and prevent development and support environmental restoration.
  + The Great Peninsula Conservancy is in the process of trying to be added into the REPI program and should know over the next year.
  + Opportunities in the document have potential for streamflow restoration.
    - King County is interested in pursuing research to help quantify the streamflow benefits of habitat restoration projects and land acquisitions.
    - Could consider an opportunity to look at a phased project that includes research on quantifying habitat project benefits to streamflow.
* Gravel Pit Projects
  + Opportunities exist, but what are the specifics of these types of projects and their benefits? It would be helpful for the committee to have background information about how they get permitted and any opportunities for recharge benefit.
  + Potential for multi-benefit floodplains projects at these sites.
  + Reclaimed water infiltration opportunities?
  + MBR (membrane bioreactor) infiltration opportunities?
    - Wastewater treatment type, opportunity for infiltration into groundwater as opposed to marine systems.
  + Stacy will discuss gravel pit project opportunities with John Covert. Anticipate at least 3 opportunities in Kitsap.
* Wastewater management
  + Older systems combine sewage and stormwater (CSS) management systems which can lead to problems. There may be opportunities to help separate these systems in some users.
  + Opportunities to replace the water source for some uses.
    - Some commercial activities can be conducted using reclaimed water as opposed to clean drinking water.
  + Switching water sources is difficult with gravel pits. Most gravel pits have non-consumptive water rights.
* Project Recommendation:
  + The mouth of Long Lake going dry. Augmentation spot potentially. In the plan assessment the tribe did.

**Project Screening Considerations**

* Stacy reviewed the fatal flaws screening criteria discussed October 30 and invited additional thoughts about the fatal flaw screening and project review criteria.
* Reminder that all the recommendations in the document are just to start the conversation and the committee can shape however we’d like.
* First proposed screening is fatal flaws, then tier one screening (project benefits), and lastly tier 2 (NEB evaluation).
* This memo has not been shared with the full committee yet, and workgroup members are encouraged to provide feedback.
* Also important for committee members with regulatory authority to let the rest of the committee know if projects cannot work because of regulatory/political reasons.

**Additional input on fatal flows** (Stacy captured in track changes in document):

* Recognized that if a project is flagged for fatal flaws, it may not be a bad project, rather that they are not worth investing time/resources at this moment.
* NPDES and TMDL consideration for fatal flaws.
  + Relationship between requirements under these plans/laws.
  + We don’t want to double credit for things required under TMDL.
  + However, there are opportunities to piggy-back off of these projects and achieve more benefits.
  + This is generally on a case-by-case basis.
* Substantive conflict with other watershed plans: can there be an example?
  + Salmon Recovery Plans, LIO Ecosystem Recovery Plans, Blackjack/Curley Watershed Plan, etc.
  + Ideally, we want this process to be consistent and in support of other planning processes.
  + Projects that have potential to increase flooding events.
* Question about projects already required by other WAC regulations:
  + Who is in charge of tracking this? It’s the responsibility of the committee to understand which projects might be required elsewhere. Ecology and consultants can also do a review.
* What about projects where instream flow rules would need to be changed?
  + Committees can recommend these projects, and recommend that Ecology undergo a rulemaking process to change instream flow rules, but there is no guarantee they will happen.
  + Potential for exceptions in rulemaking to be made for individual projects.
* Framing of project ideas is important to convey their streamflow restoration benefits.
* Relationship between projects that don’t directly add water
  + Not a fatal flaw, but this comes up in the secondary review.
* ***The workgroup is comfortable making the recommendation to the committee to move forward with the current fatal flaws as an initial review for projects. Stacy will prepare the recommendation for the December committee meeting.***

**Secondary Screening: Project Benefits and Review Criteria** (Stacy captured in track changes in document)

* Four sets of criteria: water offset criteria (compared to quantity needed for plan and location in WRIA), habitat criteria (location, streamflow improvement potential, magnitude, species, and life stage), feasibility (cost/benefit ratio, operation and maintenance, resilience), and implementation (consistency with existing laws and policies, sponsor commitment).
  + Suggestions
    - Risk from Liability
    - Certainty of Success
      * Under the resilience section or feasibility section.
    - Resilience
      * Break into two sections, one for long term resilience of the project, but also climate resilience and drought.
      * Economic change, elected official change, ownerships, etc.
        + Resilient to a changing political climate
    - Timing and volume of offsets
      * Seasonal timing of water impacts
      * Could be included in the water offset criteria. Placing it in the habitat section may hurt habitat projects that don’t have a water offset potential.
      * Refer to language in the NEB guidance: “critical season” to ensure timing is right for fish migration
        + Section 3.1, definition of critical flow period
    - Proximity of offset projects not just in the same sub-basin, but close to the actual location of expected rural growth and development.
    - Projects that depend on a partner (landowner, government body, etc.)
      * Try to capture this under certainty of success and resilience.
    - Flooding risk of a project is a large concern.
  + Consider other concerns like pushback from locals, environmental justice concerns, etc.
    - Community support/resistance is important to consider.
    - Some of this is likely to come out in the fatal flaws analysis.
    - The scoring table can be modified to be consistent with the grant language around this issue.
    - Added some language into the criteria to capture this recommendation.
* Scoring Process
  + Proposal from consultants is that each of the sub-criteria is scored from 1 to 5.
    - 1 is least beneficial, 5 is the most beneficial.
    - We can modify, but the workgroup was generally comfortable with this approach.
  + Weighting can be applied to the different criteria.
    - This can be changed depending on what is most important for the committee.
    - The water offset should have the highest weight of all elements.
      * Proposal to do 50-40-5-5 as an example.
  + Habitat component will be difficult to rank on a conceptual level.
    - Highest weighting should be based on the water offset potential.
    - However, certainty is very important here for this component.
  + May want to increase weighting for feasibility.
* How do you ensure that each project proposal is at a level that can allow it adequately be reviewed through this process. Flip-side: how do you score things that are conceptual?
  + For conceptual projects it’s possible that they don’t need to be scored.
  + There is no limit to the amount of projects to include: its beneficial to add any conceptual project to the list because there might be opportunities to expand these projects in the future.
* Scoring Example of Project
  + Proposal for workgroup members to individually score projects and bring to the next meeting to compare and see how each member scores projects.
  + Stacy will revise the scoring document, Bob and Stacy will create a scoring sheet, and send out the Clear Creek project and Kingston Reclaimed Water for the committee members to use as a test of how well the scoring criteria works.

**Action Items and Next Steps**

* + Next meeting is January 8, morning. Focus on screening criteria.