

**WRIA 15**

*Beaver Task Force*

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| **Agenda** \**We have not identified set times as we expect the conversation to be fluid.* | |
| 1. **Purpose** of meeting (Stacy) 2. Summary of WRIA 15 committee **discussions on beavers to date** (Stacy)    1. Beaver projects coming forward for streamflow grant program (<https://ecy.box.com/v/WRIA15Beavers>) 3. **Brainstorm** (Angela):    1. Beaver projects (studies, specific projects, etc)    2. Beaver management proposed revisions (i.e., state or local policy recommendations). 4. Summary of **recommendations** (Angela):    1. To bring back to WRIA 15 committee    2. Summary of recommendations that have relevance across WRECs 5. Identify individual to **report out** at committee meeting (8/6)    1. Angela will give a recap during the WRIA 15 meeting. | |
| **Attendees** | |
| * Dave Ward * Kathy Peters * Brittany Gordon * Sam Phillips * Alison O’Sullivan * Seth Book * Zach Holt | * Angela Pietschmann (facilitator) * Paulina Levy (notes) * Bob Montgomery * Stacy Vynne McKinstry * John Covert |
| **Notes** | |
| * Working to include beavers in the WDFW Priority Habitat Species (PHS) List   + One goal is to encourage alternatives to beaver removal   + List is adopted by the county, so how is the county affected?   + How does the list affect BDA? Brittany spoke to her experience that some BDAs have been permitted and were required to be maintained and monitored (fish window, water level gauge) * Develop beaver management plan   + Local governments would have to present plan to WDFW   + Requires funding * Mapping where likely beaver habitat is; then using funding to purchase easements in these sites (forming a network over time) and creating the expectation for land owners that beavers will be protected   + Offers future protections if/when beavers move in   + One benefit of the network is the growing connectivity that could occur; may address high mortality concerns   + Intrinsic modeling     - Determine whether [tools Ken Pierce (WDFW) presented](http://geo.wa.gov/datasets/wdfw::puget-sound-high-resolution-change-detection-2006-2017) are applicable for these purposes; weigh in / provide DFW with feedback; leverage existing mapping tools     - Hydrologic modeling (topographic position index) offers the water holding potential, but habitat suitability analysis will be focused on beaver behavior     - How is the mapping guiding the modeling of offset potential? Bob encouraged a conservative approach given uncertainties       * Historic presence could indicate potential   + Sponsor?     - Many options for mapping; county, WDFW, nonprofits     - More discussion needed for keeping the easement; GPC?     - Dave wonders if Kitsap could incorporate with existing program ([transfer of development rights](https://www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/Pages/TDR.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8BTransfer%20of%20Development%20Rights,buy%20and%20sell%20development%20rights.&text=conserving%20rural%20land%20that%20provides,%2C%20outdoor%20recreation%2C%20or%20both.)) * Include education and outreach on importance of protecting beavers/habitat as part of overall package * Monitoring: choosing sites and collecting data for analysis   + Zach volunteered to see what the impacts are     - Do we have areas that would be suitable beaver habitat but have been altered over time?   + Perhaps piezometers (groundwater measurement) are a better tool than stream gauges to assess the impact beavers have on the hydrology? * Other considerations   + Alison brought up the importance of careful design of BDAs; if done improperly could cause damage   + Monitor for fish passage   + Implement BDAs higher in watershed   + Encourage 3-4 smaller BDAs instead of 1 large one   + Anywhere and everywhere! Lot of pilots/tests - potentially on PGST reservation   + Committee discussion recommended if offset value quantified     - Zach: research of analog systems   + Support for a package of beaver proposals vs multiple individual proposals   + Could share package with other WRIAs and gain support   **Potential Recommendation Language for Committee Consideration (package):**   1. **WDFW Priority Habitat Species (PHS) List**    1. Support adding the American Beaver (Castor canadensis) as a priority species to the PHS list and **develop management recommendations.**       1. May be independent process (WDFW); may not need public process / county input. Brittany to confirm.    2. Provide guidance and implementation recommendations for Critical Areas Ordinance 2025 update (Kitsap, Pierce, King Counties).       1. Note: as part of the local public policy process, ordinances and policies may be shaped and altered    3. Explicitly highlight overlapping benefits with existing planning processes and similar policies 2. **Develop local beaver habitat management plans**     1. Local governments would have to present plan to WDFW    2. Keep it consistent with WDFW recommendations (e.g., trapping).    3. Funding & oversight       1. Create a template for homeowners to facilitate completion of plans (rather than hiring a technical consultant).       2. Encourage mitigation sequencing via template (can’t require)       3. WDFW could provide some biological oversight, is there county oversight? Dave will look into permits. SEPA? Zach will follow up. 3. **Mapping likely beaver habitat and protecting area**    1. Identify potential easements to purchase and protect as beaver habitat       1. Easements recipient needs to be identified, but Dave will look into adding as part of the County [Transfer of Development Rights](https://www.kitsapgov.com/dcd/Pages/TDR.aspx#:~:text=%E2%80%8BTransfer%20of%20Development%20Rights,buy%20and%20sell%20development%20rights.&text=conserving%20rural%20land%20that%20provides,%2C%20outdoor%20recreation%2C%20or%20both.) program    2. Combine mapping and modeling to understand both the water holding potential and beaver habitat suitability    3. Framing recommendations:       1. Education & outreach needed on benefits / opportunities to accommodate (easements, etc.).       2. Voluntary approach to using land not being used anyway.       3. Immediately monetize marginal land (little human value).       4. Social marketing based approach - perceived monetary value. 4. **Education & outreach**    1. Connect existing partners: eg. Kitsap Enviro Educators Program (KEEP), Conservation Districts, WSU Extension, West Sound Wildlife Shelter, KPS, Salmon Enhancement Groups, Local Nonprofits    2. Define audience: WREC, building community, homeowners, realtors, developers, KPA, property rights org, farm bureau, Kitsap Builders Association (rep on WRIA 15 committee), surrounding lake property (lake district), etc.    3. Address known concerns: tree loss, chomp marks in trees, creating hazard trees, killing marketable trees, encroaching on farmland, change of vegetation, flooding 5. **Monitoring & research**    1. Define goal(s):       1. BDAs through HPA: fish passage monitoring, groundwater level, and vegetation type          1. Permit monitoring (number that have gone in, number of follow-up repairs for BDA’s)          2. Cross sections of BDA locations, streambed elevation profiles             1. Does it have benefit beyond aquifer recharge       2. BDA vs beaver habitat effectiveness       3. Quantifying benefit and defining what benefit is from surface water/habitat perspective (temperature, streamflows, especially low flows in summer, salmon monitoring, riparian vegetation, etc) | |