

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Barnaby Reach Project

Monday, August 24, 2015, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Meeting location: Concrete Senior Center, 45821 Railroad Street, Concrete

Meeting Purpose: Introduce role of advisory committee, hear presentations on stakeholder interview results and status of project alternatives, and discuss next steps for the project alternatives

SUMMARY

Attendees:

Bob Warinner, WDFW
Marc Duboiski, RCO-SRFB
Jon Riedel, NPS
Jeff McGowan Skagit County Public Works
Phil Kincare, USFS
Dan Berentson, Skagit County
Jenny Baker, The Nature Conservancy
Christie Fairchild, Resident Land Owner
Russ Dalton, Resident, Martin Road
Tammy Armstrong, WDNR
Jay Drye, WSDOT
Sam Chi, WSDOT
George Carlson, WSDOT
Keith Greenwood, Sierra Pacific Industries
Rick Hartson, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
Corey Ruiz, Wildcat Steelhead Club
Howard Stafford, Resident Land Owner
Karlee Deatherage, Representative Suzan Del Bene's office
Devin Smith, Skagit River System Cooperative
Steve Hinton, Skagit River System Cooperative
Dave Pflug, Seattle City Light
Erin Lowery, Seattle City Light
Commissioner Lisa Janicki, Skagit County Board of County Commissioners
Jason Buehler, Skagit River System Cooperative (note-taker)
Cynthia Carlstad, Carlstad Consulting - Facilitator

Introductions and Agenda Review

Cynthia opened the meeting and provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and her role as facilitator:

- Committee is intended as forum for agency, tribal and community stakeholders to hear regular updates from the project sponsors and provide input as the project advances.
- Timing for convening stakeholder advisory committee was driven by two primary factors:
 1. Project has completed its initial assessment of alternatives, and is now moving into more detailed assessment, alternative development, and design. Stakeholder input is important at this point forward because the project sponsors are examining specific actions that will eventually lead to the final project configuration and design.
 2. Community concerns raised at the February, 2015 public meeting in Sedro Woolley alerted the project sponsors that greater and more frequent engagement with the community was needed. This Committee is part of that expanded stakeholder and

community engagement program, along with more frequent community meetings, project updates, and one-on-one communications.

Cynthia briefly reviewed the meeting agenda, which mirrors this summary.

Participants introduced themselves.

Cynthia noted the project sponsor representatives attending the meeting.

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Role

Cynthia referred participants to the handout titled “*Barnaby Reach Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee Participation Protocols and Meeting Guidelines*”, and briefly walked through the content, noting that participants had not been provided this document in advance of the meeting, and therefore would need additional time to fully review it.

- Purpose of Stakeholder Advisory Committee – as described above
- Participants – major known stakeholder entities as listed
- How the Stakeholder Advisory Committee Input will be used by Project Sponsors
 - Committee is not decision-making body, so will not be asked to develop recommendations
 - Sponsors are seeking to understand preferences, ideas, concerns, and perspectives about aspects of the project
- Meeting Protocols
 - Stakeholder Adviser responsibilities include typical meeting ground rules such as engaging in the meeting topics, communicating openly and honestly, listening to other’s input with an open mind, and communicating within each individual’s organization/entity so that they can represent that group at the meetings.
 - Facilitator responsibilities include developing useful, productive meeting content, starting and ending meetings on time, making space for all to participate, and keeping the meetings on track to agenda topics.
 - Cynthia will also be responsible for preparing meeting summaries. Draft summaries will be emailed to participants within 5 days of the meeting. Comments and suggested revisions will be addressed and the meeting summaries finalized at the subsequent Committee meeting. Summaries will also be available on the project website.
- Representation of Committee Work
 - Representation of committee work is expected to be captured in meeting summaries. The hope is that specific input from the committee that shapes the project will be agreeable to all participants. Where differing opinions or preferences remain, those will be captured in the meeting records (summaries, flip chart notes) as acceptable to the individual participant(s).
 - Administrative decisions, such as meeting dates/times, etc. will be made to accommodate the majority of participants
- Participation Protocols may be revised/amended as described in the document.

Discussion:

Question: For community resident representatives, what are expectations for representing residential community? Answer: Make effort to update and be aware of perspectives of other neighbors. Some may use email distribution or just talking with nearby neighbors.

Question: What is stakeholders’ role in creating documents and alternatives? Answer: Most Committee work will be captured in meeting summaries, flip chart notes, map drawings, and other meeting products.

Question and request: How does feedback to the Committee work so that Committee participants know how input is used? Project sponsors should commit to providing feedback to the Committee about how input is used so that participants know their thoughts have been heard.

Stakeholder Interview Results

Cynthia provided a PowerPoint slide presentation on results from the one-on-one/small group stakeholder interviews. (See attached presentation). The presentation closely followed the slide text, and there were no questions or comments from participants.

Project Information and Status

Devin Smith provided a PowerPoint slide presentation (see attached) that addressed the following information:

- Overview of project development work done so far
 - Project location, existing structures within the project area, and a map of the conservation properties within the project site
 - Project team consists of Seattle City Light, WDFW, The Nature Conservancy (land owners) and Skagit River System Cooperative (project management). Technical assessment work was completed by the consulting firm Natural Systems Design.
 - Project history began in 2007 when WDFW discontinued hatchery use, and funding was obtained to begin feasibility study for a habitat project in 2009.
 - Values guiding project alternative development are:
 - Restoration of natural floodplain conditions and processes
 - Benefits to multiple fish and wildlife species
 - No increase in flooding and/or erosion conditions
 - Costs of project
 - Recreational access, including hunting, fishing, and bird watching
 - Site plan showing features of the 4 alternatives examined through the assessment work done to-date
- Project team conclusions and decisions based on existing work
 - Slide: Analysis Findings: Floodplain Connectivity
 - This slide represents hydraulic modeling results for Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 at a 2-year Skagit River flow. The slide depicts the difference in water levels (higher or lower) than would be predicted under existing conditions. Higher water levels in the project area, shown in brown color tones, are a desirable condition to the project team, noting that higher water levels must not affect neighboring properties unless approved by that property owner. Alternative 4 shows widespread higher water levels within the project site. These results led the project sponsors to conclude that this alternative would greatly improve floodplain function because of the connection with the river at a 2-year Skagit River flow. A 2-year flow is often used by scientists to assess river processes because:
 - The channel is typically completely full and mild flooding may occur. This shows what areas of the adjacent floodplain can be most readily connected to the river.
 - The flow is important for sediment transport and shaping the channel itself.
 - Slide: Analysis Findings: Adult Fish Production – These results show that Alternative 4 is predicted to produce large increases in chum and chinook salmon, and some increase for steelhead trout. These results led the project sponsors to conclude that the extensive floodplain reconnection provided by Alternative 4 not only improves fish productivity immediately, it also will improve even more with time.
 - Slide: Analysis Findings: 100-Year Flood Risk – Similar to the Floodplain Connectivity slide, this slide depicts the difference in water levels (higher or lower), than would be predicted under existing conditions. The 100-year flood was used because it is an extreme flood event, considered by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be the “base flood” for flood insurance maps. The hydraulic modeling results

showed that higher water levels would occur in the project site (shown in brown color tones), but not downstream. Higher water levels are also indicated upstream from the project in the mainstem Skagit River. Based on these results, the project sponsors concluded that a project could be implemented that does not cause flood risk impacts to neighboring property owners.

- Slide: Where Are We Now? - presentation followed slide bullets
- Additional information and analysis needs
 - Slide: Planned Refinements to Analysis Tools – presentation followed slide bullets.
 - Devin pointed out where the current analysis used ground and water survey data versus LiDAR. More ground survey work is needed and planned. It is very important to pick up the nuances of the ground surface to enable accurate understanding about where water will flow. Knowledge of those familiar with the site is especially helpful to this since it is such a large area. Howard Stafford emphasized that understanding how False Lucas Slough relates is very important as it plays a major role in the flooding of Martin Road and Rockport Cascade Road. Christie Fairchild concurred.
 - Slide: Evaluate Local Contributions to Flooding – presentation followed slide bullets.
 - Devin noted that local features such as culverts, ditches, driveways can be factors in localized flooding, and these features were not modeled.
 - Marc Duboiski asked if this would be the right forum to address fish passage concerns under roads in adjacent areas as RCO potentially has grant funding for that.
 - Participants provided the following input, which was documented on flip charts:
 1. Flood duration effects could be important – either seasonal (such as early season vs. late season floods) or simply the duration of flood itself.
 2. How did flood events analyzed relate to actual events? For example, what was the recurrence interval for the 2003 flood? Russ Dalton has flood levels marked on his basement door, which will be very useful to validate the model during the next phase.
 3. Relationship of upstream dam releases. For example, 2003 flood was especially bad because the Corps had to start releasing water from the upstream dams which increased flood levels suddenly and dramatically. Flood evacuation levels are based on river level, but participants were not aware of notification to local fire departments when dam spills were going to occur in 2003.
 4. Rain-on-snow events could be important to understand.
 5. 1995-1996 back-to-back floods are good example of extreme, all-river events. Widespread flooding. River did not recover from Dec 1995 flood before Jan 1996 flood occurred.
 6. Extreme floods have been occurring every 7-10 years.
 7. Climate change will be evaluated in future work
 8. Sediment routing and budgeting should be understood – will inform how the river will respond to the project. The river may be sediment-starved because of the upstream dams. There is lots of material movement in this area, and new flows will change the sloughs.
 9. Geology of reach and floodplain should be understood – relates to where avulsions (sudden channel changes) may be most likely.
 10. Ground survey in False Lucas Slough is important data to get.
 11. Residents know that flow moves from Barnaby/Harrison to False Lucas at high flows, and that this is river water versus tributary water.
 12. Road closures, gage data may help validate model results for historical events – 1990, 1995, 1996, 2003, 2006. Roads were closed by tributary floods in 2009, so it could be helpful to look at all road closures due to flooding and use that to inform the project hydraulic model.

13. Localized flooding may also be caused by tributary flows for certain events.
 14. WSDOT study – does it include having the Barnaby Reach project online?
WSDOT representatives noted to participants that the WSDOT study is in draft, and has not completed the WSDOT-internal quality assurance / quality control reviews normally required prior to document distribution. Although they feel the document and results are sound, they asked that anyone reading the document use it only as a draft, non-citable report.
 15. Highway 530 is a significant infrastructure feature that is impacted by flooding, and there is some thought that it is flooded more frequently in recent years.
 16. Potential Committee topic: Presentation on how Seattle City Light operates its dams during floods
 17. Do we understand why the Skagit River no longer flows through Barnaby Slough enough to know that if we put it there, that it will stay? Are there non-human factors that may have affected what has developed and now exists on site (i.e. Are there sloughs that have been orphaned naturally and cannot be reconnected?)? Are there other factors that should be better understood about this? The project team has confirmed that the river used Barnaby Slough in the early 1900s. Some flow does still get into Barnaby Slough from the Skagit River.
 18. When river changes happen because of natural events, there is more tolerance for impacts to human residents, but if humans cause river changes to occur, there is no tolerance for impacts to humans – higher standard for risk management.
 19. We do not currently know where the historical connecting channel was from the Skagit River to Barnaby Slough or the nature of the old channel. Look for the old river channel upstream from the WDFW inlet dike on Barnaby Slough
 20. Look at analogs elsewhere – potentially from where effects to rivers from volcanic processes have been active and studied – e.g. Toutle River. Some historical documentation indicates possible Glacier Peak volcanic material influence on the river.
 21. Potential future meeting topic: Skagit County's Martin Road project
 22. USGS is intending to acquire new LiDAR data, and there is potential for partnering to acquire data for the Barnaby Reach site. Project team is aware of this.
- Possible modifications to alternatives under consideration
 - Slide: Potential Measures For Flood and Erosion Protection Under Consideration
 - Slide: Four panel photo slide showing examples of potential wood structure measures that the project sponsors are beginning to consider.
 - This topic will be the main agenda item for the next meeting, or the month following.
 - Two suggestions from participants that could be added to the list of measures to consider adding to the project alternative(s) to provide flood and erosion risk protection are the following:
 - Grade control structures to control incision
 - Look at swales on TNC land downstream from Harrison Slough

Wrap-up

- After a quick participant poll, the next meeting will be on Monday, September 28, 2015. Same location and time.
- Draft meeting summary will be sent to participants within the next 5 days.
- Requests and ideas for Committee meeting topics should be sent to Devin or Cynthia. If smaller group sessions are helpful for specific topics, the sponsors are very open to that.
- Following the next Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting, the project sponsors intend to schedule a Community Meeting in Rockport to share and get input on additional analysis planned

and potential measures to address flood and erosion risk.

Attachments:

- Document: Meeting agenda
- Document: Barnaby Reach Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee Participation Protocols and Meeting Guidelines
- Microsoft PowerPoint handouts: Stakeholder Interview Results
- Microsoft PowerPoint handouts: Barnaby Reach (Project Information presentation)