

**Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan
Oversight Committee
Semi-Annual Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 1, 2014
8:45 a.m. to noon**

Conference Room 5965/5975, 59th Floor
Seattle Municipal Tower
700 Fifth Avenue, Seattle Public Utilities

Minutes

Attendees:

<i>Members:</i>	<i>Staff:</i>
Jim Erckmann	Liz Ablow
Bob Everitt	Dave Beedle
Cyndy Holtz	Paul Faulds
Chris Konrad	Suzy Flagor
Matt Longenbaugh	Rolf Gersonde
Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz	Amy LaBarge
Tim Romanski	Rand Little
Buck Smith	Jesse Narog
Frank Urabeck	Crystal Raymond
<i>Others Present:</i>	
Randy McIntosh	

Approval of agenda -
Approved unanimously

The Oversight Committee’s newest member, Jason Mulvihill-Kuntz, WRIA 8 Watershed Coordinator, was introduced to the committee.

Review of HCP research and monitoring activities – Cyndy explained that the HCP’s research and monitoring programs were developed in the late 1990s and Oversight Committee (OC) review at this time, 14 years after HCP signing, is appropriate to determine if the research and monitoring activities are still relevant and warranted.

SPU staff who manage HCP research and monitoring activities provided an overview of the current activities objectives and status as follows:

Instream Flows (Rand Little), including Chinook Studies, Steelhead Redd Monitoring, Accretion Flow Study, and Switching Criteria Study. There was acknowledgment that, while the Instream Flow Commission (IFC) has decision-making authority over instream flow research and monitoring activities, it is appropriate for the OC, while it is conducting this comprehensive HCP research and monitoring review, to inquire about how the IFC is using

HCP instream flow research and monitoring dollars to address potential effects of climate change on the instream flow program. There was some discussion about steelhead declines and the need for additional research on this problem, especially with the proposed listing as endangered.

Landsburg Mitigation (Paul Faulds) – Includes Sockeye research and monitoring activities related to the hatchery. Paul described the nearly finalized Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the Sockeye Hatchery, which seeks to answer key questions identified in the hatchery adaptive management plan. Other ongoing activities include Fry Condition, Fry Marking and Evaluation, Fry Trapping and Counting, Fish Health, Lake Washington Plankton Studies, Adult Survival, and Short Term Fry Rearing. . There was a comment about the need to set up more robust communication among the IFC, AFC and HCP OC.

Watershed Stream and Riparian (Dave Beedle) – Two current activities include Aquatic Project Monitoring and Long-Term Aquatic Monitoring. Dave was asked if he collects temperature data, which might provide information about climate change effects. Dave explained that the temperature data he does collect is not very robust. Dave was asked how the data he collects is reported out. The project-specific data is just used internally to inform how to approach future projects. The long-term monitoring data is reported out on a three-year cycle.

Bull Trout and Common Loon activities under Watershed Terrestrial Research and Monitoring (Amy LaBarge for Dwayne Paige) – Bull Trout studies have been completed and no further monitoring is programmed in the HCP. There may be some future bull trout monitoring related to the Chester Morse Lake Pump Plant Project and/or climate change and additional discussion is needed on this item. Common Loon Monitoring, Spotted Owl Surveys, Marbled Murrelet Surveys, and Forest Habitat/Species Optional Surveys could support monitoring of varied species that have known presence in the CRMW (e.g., northern goshawk) and/or may be vulnerable to climate related habitat impacts (e.g., amphibians). Amy was asked if Barred Owl monitoring is conducted. We know Barred Owls are present; no monitoring has been conducted since the 2006 surveys. There was discussion about the usefulness of conducting Spotted Owl surveys. Their presence is a function of regional influence, not watershed specific influences, so survey data is not very useful to watershed managers. (Additional note after meeting: however, the 2008 spotted owl surveys recommended annual follow up on the resident male that was found in old forest near Findlay Lake.). Tim Romanski referred the group to the FEIS on the barred owl removal study, although it is not being conducted in Washington.

Watershed Terrestrial Monitoring and Research (Amy LaBarge) –Long Term Forest Habitat Inventory (using permanent sample plots) and Forest Restoration Monitoring. Amy was asked if the permanent sample plots are set up to detect climate change effects. They can detect climate change across the watershed (e.g., tree growth, mortality rates, regeneration, understory diversity and cover) but they are not set up to distinguish differences along elevation gradients. They may not be helpful for forest health monitoring, but there might be some adjustments to the plots that would make them more useful for that type of monitoring. It was pointed out that, to identify what to monitor, it is important to develop a hypothesis first. Jim mentioned Jerry Franklin's observation that our forests are dominated by only a few species, all conifers and thus closely related. This creates a significant vulnerability in the face of climate change.

There was discussion about scaling back the number of Forest Restoration Project Monitoring plots to be monitored in the future because data collected so far has indicated positive results, and HCP objectives are being met. This would be a potential area of cost savings; perhaps funding could be shifted to the Forest Health Monitoring activity. A comment was made that when we have learned from monitoring efforts, dollars should be moved to areas with greater uncertainty. It was pointed out that any changes in funding allocation the OC recommends could be changed again in the future if and when needs and circumstances change.

There was then an overall discussion about potential changes in the current HCP research and monitoring program and specific research and monitoring activities that should be considered as possible funding sources. Recommendations discussed:

- There is no future Chester Morse Lake and tributaries bull trout survey work programmed. This should be added to future years. Bull trout is a temperature-sensitive species.
- Long-term monitoring activities have the most potential opportunity for re-programming funds for climate effects monitoring, including Long-Term Aquatic and Riparian Monitoring, and Long-Term Forest Habitat Inventory.
- OC should inquire with the IFC about its approach to monitoring climate effects on instream flows and best ways to communicate/coordinate about research and monitoring efforts.
- OC should inquire with the Sockeye Hatchery Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG) about its approach to monitoring effects of climate on Cedar River Sockeye.
- There is a need to clarify cost categories, how much money can be reallocated, and in what process.

The subject experts on staff should develop more detailed recommendations based on the above-described recommendations and submit them to the OC either by email or at the next meeting in December. It was noted that, while the OC can advise the SPU directly about watershed elements of the HCP, the OC may also wish to make high-level recommendations to the IFC and AFC regarding elements of the HCP coming under the purview of those committees and the signatories to their respective agreements.

Motion to approve the above action (Urabeck). Second (Smith). Carried unanimously.

Approval of minutes of December 3, 2013 – Carried unanimously.

Climate Subcommittee Report – Jim Erckmann briefed the OC on the progress of the Climate Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is holding off on taking action on activities investigating climate effects on water supply pending the work of the SPU Water Management Section (Tom Fox, Alan Chinn) which is modeling new downscaled data that will project river flows in 20 year increments (for 2040, 2060, 2080). Today's recommendations are preliminary. Chris added that the topics that will be presented today are just two of dozens of possible topics the Subcommittee discussed.

Cedar River Mainstem temperature effects – Rand Little presented a Subcommittee paper that discusses potential effects of climate change on mainstem (lower Cedar Falls to Lake Washington) temperatures, proposes early indicators, and recommends priority actions. One question inquired why the upper Cedar and Rex Rivers were not included in the paper. Water

temperature is important for stream communities, with salmonids proposed as an indicator species, looking at impacts of temperature on various life history stages. There was some discussion about the effects of inflows from the Chester Morse Lake moraine, as 75% to 80% of moraine loss seeps back into the mainstem downstream.

Recommended early warning indicators include analyzing data collected over 20 years at USGS stream gauges, and proposed a set of characteristics that could indicate climate effects, including timing of salmonid life stages and presence of invasive species such as small mouth bass. There was some discussion about temperature stratification in Masonry Pool, what data are currently available, and whether additional temperature monitoring is needed.

The OC agreed with the recommendations but suggested moving the “mid-term” recommendation up to the “near-term” category. The OC requested that Rand further develop an action plan for the recommendations that includes objectives and possible collaborators such as Washington Department of Ecology given the water quality implications and Washington Fish and Wildlife given the fishery implications. The OC asked that Rand also try to estimate the level of effort involved and potential new costs of taking the recommended actions.

Fire Hazard effects - Amy LaBarge presented a Subcommittee paper that discusses potential effects of climate change on fire risk and impacts on water supply and habitats in the municipal watershed. The approach would be to examine changes in disturbance regimes. The near-term recommendation for this topic is to organize workshops on climate change and wildfire. This topic is also of broad interest in the region to forest and water supply managers.

The OC agreed with the recommendations and requested that Amy continue to work on developing a proposal for a workshop that would identify goals and collaborators, and to estimate the need for new funding for the workshops and other recommended actions.

The OC asked that the climate change subcommittee get recommendations to the OC by email prior to the December meeting.

Good of the order – There were no topics for this agenda item.

Adjourn - The meeting was adjourned at 12:00.