

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

Friday, June 4, 2010

Seattle Municipal Tower, Conference Room 5965
700 Fifth Avenue, Seattle

Members attending:

Richard Bigley
Walt Canter
Jay Cook
Jim Erckmann
Bob Everitt
Cyndy Holtz
Chris Konrad
Matt Longenbaugh
Bill Robinson
Tim Romanski
Sue Rooney
Isabel Tinoco

Staff attending:

Nancy Ahern
Martin Baker
Suzy Flagor
Jim Kapusinski
Amy LaBarge
Rand Little
Dwayne Paige
Gary Sprague

Welcome, review and approve agenda: The meeting was commenced at 9:15 a.m. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Ray Hoffman, Director, SPU: Ray Hoffman addressed the Oversight Committee and thanked members for their years of dedicated service on the committee, acknowledging the ten-year milestone of HCP implementation.

8-Year Comprehensive Review:

Climate change response: Joan Kersnar, Drinking Water Planning Manager, gave a presentation on the SPU's efforts in planning for climate change response. Committee members asked questions about:

- The relation of forecasts to intertie with Tacoma and Everitt. Interties with Tacoma and Everitt were not included or considered. Each utility did their own independent analysis and the results do not assume or include interconnections between the systems.
- Why the analysis focused on impacts of the warmest/wettest scenario; Joan agreed it would be helpful to also look at the dry/cool scenario
- Did SPU consider the effects of evaporative losses; Joan indicated that these are more trivial here than in other locations; simulated runoff should account for evaporation
- Why the assumptions about conservation extend only to 2030; Joan indicated that there is low confidence in anticipating new technologies further into the future

- Does the analysis factor in potential use of reclaimed water as is being proposed by King County; this would require more detailed analysis. The amount of water that could be provided is small, about 1.7 mgd in SPU's service area, and would not do much to help the overall supply outlook, and it comes at a high price. It was pointed out that the cost of reclaimed water is difficult to justify because of the high cost of infrastructure.

Wildlife Management: (At this point there was a deviation from the order of agenda items.) Martin Baker, Deputy Director, SPU, offered some comments on the committee's recommendations related to wildlife management in the Cedar River Municipal Watershed. He discussed how the HCP agreement and the settlement agreement with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe are distinct agreements with different foci, and acknowledged that Seattle must be attendant to both. The HCP focuses on habitat and takes a landscape level approach. The settlement agreement recognizes tribal treaty rights. Neither agreement obligates the City to perform wildlife management functions. The City will continue to report to the Oversight Committee on habitat management activities and consistency with the HCP objectives.

Bob Everitt, WDFW, commented that WDFW will continue to push back on Seattle regarding wildlife management as it disagrees with the position that Seattle is not involved in some wildlife management in the Cedar River Watershed since some wildlife management activities could have an impact on the HCP objectives.

Climate change response (continued): Amy LaBarge, SPU Senior Forest Ecologist, gave a presentation on ideas staff developed for responding to the effects of climate change in the municipal watershed. In response to a question about what the primary concerns about threats are, staff answered that lower summer stream flows could affect bull trout rearing and higher fall flows could affect bull trout spawning. Staff was asked if the lake ecosystem is sensitive to reservoir operations and if there is coordination with SPU Drinking Water Planning staff in forecasting work, specifically regarding reservoir operations changes. Dwayne Paige replied that there is coordination between the Divisions on the complexities of reservoir management for multiple objectives. For instance, because model(s) primarily focused on predicting water supply and demand (e.g., using stream flow, reservoir levels, storage volume, etc.) do not typically address potential changes in the temperature structural regime of the reservoir, which directly affects fish behavior (e.g., listed bull trout), SPU (with PSU and UW) is developing a dynamic temperature model and a linked bioenergetic (i.e., food habits) model to help assess potential future impacts on fish populations in the reservoir system relative to a range of future environmental and operational scenarios.. Amy replied that increased drought increases tree stress, which increases susceptibility to insects. Additionally, insect survival typically improves with higher winter temperatures, so their higher numbers can combine with increased tree susceptibility to cause more mortality.

Restoration Thinning/Invasive Species response: Amy LaBarge gave a presentation in response to the Oversight Committee's recommendation regarding the HCP restoration thinning program and invasive species. It was pointed out that climate change could affect not just non-native species; it may also cause changes in the behavior of native species. (e.g., in 2009, Douglas Fir Bark Beetle is currently causing the highest level of Douglas Fir mortality in western Washington the last 30 years).

There was a brief discussion about the Oversight Committee appointing a sub-committee to serve in a more technical advisory capacity to Seattle for the HCP watershed management component, similar to how the AFC and IFC function for the Landsburg Mitigation and Instream Flow components, respectively. Bob Everitt pointed out that, since such a sub-committee would require more technical guidance than agency representatives on the Oversight Committee may be able to provide, they might want to appoint others from their agency staff to serve on such a sub-committee.

Instream Flows response: Rand Little gave a presentation in response to the Oversight Committee's recommendations related to Instream Flows. Rand was asked if, in looking at additional metrics, would the metrics only look at the river down to Landsburg; Rand replied that it would include the entire length of the river, to the mouth at Renton. It was pointed out that channel features are key elements in determining fish habitat condition. The channel downstream from Landsburg has been substantially altered by flood plain development and flood protection structures. ; Studies by US Fish and Wildlife Service and others indicate that newly emerged Chinook prefer low velocity habitats such as those offered by off-channel areas. These habitat types have been reduced by human activities along the river. Those off-channel habitats that remain may be of particular importance to rearing juvenile Chinook. Expanding the metrics to include some measure of available off-channel habitat during Chinook early rearing may be of value. [Cyndy, if I recall there were two comments, one by Bill Robinson and one by Matt. I have tried to link them and address both.] There was some discussion about constituent pressure in King County to remove large woody debris and the effect that has on habitat development. Rand agreed that assessing the effects of instream flow management practices on fish habitat is complicated by the altered nature of the channel downstream of Landsburg and that a measurement of available off-channel rearing area during the spring of each year will be explored.

Landsburg Mitigation response: Gary Sprague gave a presentation in response to the Oversight Committee's recommendations related to the Landsburg Mitigation component. He explained that HCP funding for the Interim Mitigation for Chinook, Coho and Steelhead activity is coming to an end, that staff had applied for grants to continue some research that was formerly being funded by this activity, and that some research will be conducted under the sockeye hatchery adaptive management program. After the sockeye run, fish ladder operations go into passive (non-sorting) mode for coho, so there is no additional cost as sampling is not planned for future years. They are also looking to address a recently discovered funding shortfall in the PIT tag program and are working with the AFC to apply remaining Interim Mitigation program funding to meet this shortfall. Gary also indicated that he is working on adding daily fish passage counts information to the web site.

Summary: The Oversight Committee thanked Richard Bigley for his outstanding effort in leading the 8-Year Comprehensive Review.

Proposal for herbicide application in the watershed to treat knotweed: Cyndy Holtz explained SPU staff's efforts to move an ordinance through the City Council to allow for the limited application of the herbicide imazapyr to treat knotweed in the municipal watershed. The

Oversight Committee moved to vote to send a letter of support for allowing use of herbicide to treat knotweed in the watershed. The motion passed. Jim Erckmann volunteered to draft the letter for the Oversight Committee's review and approval.

Adjourn: The 10-year anniversary of the HCP was observed; cake was served to celebrate. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.