

HCP Oversight Committee Meeting  
12/9/09

**OC action items in red**

**Staff action items in blue**

**Attendees:**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>OC Members</b>
Cyndy Holtz	Jerry Franklin
Gary Sprauge	Tim Romanski
Jim Erckmann	Richard Bigley
Rand Little	Chris Konrad
Liz Ablow	Matt Longenbaugh
Sally Nickelson	Sue Rooney
Rolf Gersonde	Bob Everitt
	Norm Winn
	Jay Cook
	Steve Ralph
	Isabel Tinoco

Jim announced his upcoming retirement next March

**8 year review of HCP**

Subcommittee conducting draft review:

Richard Bigley, Chris Konrad, Bill Robinson, Steve Foley

Today's objectives: go over draft review, get feedback

Philosophy for this review

- Independent review of HCP
- Educate new incoming Seattle administration
- Continue process started with 5-year review

General comments

- In future important to focus on adaptation to likely climate change
- City must remain nimble, build in and maintain flexibility
- Website was an immense help. Looked though old bound reports, which were useful, but website provided information they needed

Surprises

- Very busy 3 years
  - Multiple minor amendments

- MIT settlement agreement
- Modified incidental take permit
- New HCP website
- High level of strategic planning completed

#### Schedule of commitments and achievement

- This appears to be a transition period
- Budget pressures – won't get better
- Many commitments well on way
- OC job – keep eye on the ball
- Still have a long ways to go to meet long-term restoration commitments
- Need to keep up the focus

#### General Conclusions

- Lot of praise for work done
- Not a lot of profound changes in priorities
- Encouraging broad thinking, keep up vigilance
- Focus on climate change will serve us well in water management
- Vigilance on watershed restoration – changes to forest may help ameliorate climate change

#### **Review the draft in detail**

##### *Missing elements*

- Landsburg – still in development

##### *Sections*

- Introduction - sets context
- Major Accomplishments – summary
  - MIT and new incidental take permit are 2 different issues – now separated in the next draft
  - The city removed sockeye from HCP – so changed the permit
  - Lawsuit notes from staff
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> lawsuit (state) settled
    - Lawsuit heard at 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit in Oct – decision pending, could still be appealed back to 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit or to the US Supreme Court
- Response to 5 year review
  - Provide continuity and tie this into the 5 year review

- After 5 year review, received a prompt response from Chuck about the 12 points raised
- Included the 12 points and how the city responded to these issues. City responded thoroughly to each point
- Note: the OC can take credit for the website from their suggestion to make the process more transparent

*Discussion on the 12 points from the 5-year review*

**#1 – Road improvements**

- Ahead of schedule.

**#3 – Replacing undersize culverts.**

- Completed 257
- Original commitment was only 100 –because of an incomplete survey at time of HCP.
- Have July 2016 deadline to complete road improvements. Will go well beyond HCP commitment.
- How many undersized culverts are left? Jim would need to check.
- Some will be taken care of by road decommissioning –
  - We'll be doing much more decommissioning than in HCP.
  - Cheaper to decommission than to keep them up to standard (Forest & Fish).
  - Trying to get road density down to ~1.5 mi/mi<sup>2</sup> (from ~4 mi/mi<sup>2</sup>).
  - Goal is to fix all the crossings by 2016.
- Culvert inventory – is a database, not published. Linked to GIS.

**#4 – Fixing fish blockages**

- Original estimate of fish blockages (34) in HCP was incorrect
  - Actual number was 23.
  - Will need to do a minor modification of the HCP for this.
- 15 are completed – all those that affect listed species.
- 8 are left
  - Affect cutthroat or rainbow, or both
  - All 8 have little habitat above them.

**#9 – Downstream habitat**

- Have agreement to expend dollars by 2012. May come back to parties to get more time.
- Trying to find outside funding to keep this program going. Friends of Cedar River Watershed becoming more integral part, along with King Co, CLC
- Shift focus to land stewardship from acquisition.
  - Trying to keep HCP dollars unspent to use as matches for grants.

- Getting grants to pay for knotweed eradication and native plantings on private property between Landsburg and our property.
- Expanding to do outreach, education.
- Trying to leverage our dollars to get the landowners to take action.
- Focusing our buying efforts on floodplain connection opportunities. Very expensive to buy properties.
- Questions/Comments on downstream habitat
  - Important for the HCP to encourage conservation work in other areas
  - How are you measuring outcomes
    - Tracking acres and plants, survival, # volunteers, # volunteer hours, surveys with volunteers - what they learned,
    - Have more volunteers than ever now. Many groups now participate.
    - Hard to measure, but fundamental to create a sense of stewardship/ownership. Must engage the community, landowners must care.
  - Lucky to have Friends in place and growing. There is a huge need in the lower river – more than in the watershed. It's really taking off.
  - Is city staff involved?
    - Not on site, but through salmon journey. CLC has interpretive materials. Talk about native species, why it is relevant. Friends is a focal point where information comes in then digests it for people that don't care, make it relevant.

#### **#10 – Metrics and benchmarks**

- Website accolades. Spectacular resource. Great sense of transparency. No match. Need to keep it up/current.
  - Staff is working to update metrics.
- Ask OC to continue to review the web site and the metrics
  - Think about appropriate metrics
    - Are they the right ones
    - Are we analyzing the correct way

#### **#12 – Grant funding**

- Amply demonstrated our success in pursuing outside funding.
- Other outside funding that wasn't captured in the review:
  - BPA mitigation (\$6.5 million, plus some land), plus installing the lines differently.
  - Working with UW on recolonization studies.
    - Value about \$900,000 in grants they procured, time, materials.

- SPU provided seed money, convened everyone, jointly brainstormed. It's a major research program.
- We're out of our seed money now. Trying to figure out how to continue it.
- David Chapin (with NOAA, Friends) just submitted a grant to get more funding for monitoring and public outreach with Bring Back the Natives.
- Peter Kiffney will submit a grant for teachers.
- Request OC support for important monitoring related to salmon. Need to continue long-term datasets.

### **Discussion about cost-effectiveness of fish ladder**

- The data are great. Good opportunity to demonstrate the ecological impacts of the restoration efforts.
- Genetic analysis by Joe Anderson (UW student) – getting a 2:1 return. The watershed is a source, not a sink (answered a major question).
- On a per fish basis, the fish ladder has been a huge bang for the buck. Peter Kiffney thinks it's of national significance.
- Staff should write up a simple explanation of the fish ladder story – put on website. Need to get the story out to the public.
  - Cyndy – has a powerpoint - compares costs of buying land, reconnection projects, fish ladder. No better habitat in river than above Landsburg.
- Each year the returns are building. Will have a record return for coho this year. Coho have had the largest increase. Need to remember outside factors are a major influence.

### **Discussion of public involvement/ 10 year HCP anniversary**

- Next year will be in year 10 of HCP. Ralph Naess suggested a celebration.
- We'll recruit OC to help.
- A series of activities, press releases, some large event at watershed.
- The watershed played a key role in the transition to new forestry, experiments, outreach.
- It would serve the northwest well by advertising more success stories – help change the paradigm of land stewardship.

### **Performance and Financial Commitments Section**

- City has generally spent more than commitments.
- All important commitments done.
- This is just a part of the story, and not the most important part.
- Detailed reports are distributed to OC and for the Services. But the focus is on results.

### **Watershed Management Section**

Recommendations

### **1. *Invasive species***

- a. Cost effective to use early detection/rapid response protocol.
- b. We have a major invasives program underway that to date has focused on terrestrial plants (using early detection/rapid response) – **Should add a bit of information about this program to the review.**
- c. Need to expand the invasives program to aquatic plants and animals, pathogens, insects, terrestrial animals, etc. We're already expanding to aquatic invasives. Water quality lab staff will be starting a new training for watershed staff on aquatic nuisance species in January.
- d. Keep up broad range surveys. Vigilance. We've started to figure out what that looks like. Learn from other places in NW.
- e. Do we have the financial resources? Wasn't included in the HCP. It's an unbudgeted mandate.
- f. It is a potential threat to other conservation activities. There's business case to be made for that.
- g. Training is the most important preventative measure you can take.
- h. **OC can help support future funding requests to expand the existing invasives program.**

### **2. *Restoration Thinning Program***

- a. Think broadly about RT. A lot of potential acres could benefit.
- b. Opportunities will diminish.
- c. Don't over analyze the efforts. Benefits are not disputed.
- d. Future funding?
- e. Pockets of resistance from public – need to respect.

### **3. *Climate change, strategic planning.***

- a. Careful, thorough plans, but need more long-term thinking for resilience to climate change. Encourage that broad thinking.
  - i. Staff decided not to incorporate climate change into our strategic plans, so we could finish them. We'll revisit them.
- b. **Discussion:** Do we have a good handle on the effects of climate change on forests?
  - i. No, jury is still out. Fire risk, etc. Part of being vigilant – hook up with researchers, collaborate on monitoring.
  - ii. For some forest types (east, dry forests), it is predictable. With west side forest, it's not at all clear what the consequences will be. Will likely be relative to disturbances. Not predictable at this point.
  - iii. Worry about novel behaviors of native/naturalized pests.

1. Example – pinion pine in an intense drought – had an epidemic of a native bark beetle that decimated the pine throughout its range. Level of stress.
2. What about our Douglas-fir bark beetle? Could we get something similar?
3. We're extremely vulnerable because we have just a few important species that, if wiped out, would be a disaster.
4. We need to put out antenna – with field folks.
5. Forest Service has been reduced to ineffectiveness from budget cuts.
6. Pests/pathogens – need to look for both non natives and different behaviors of natives.
7. Not much we can do proactively. Try to make forests as diverse as possible (species, age structure).
8. Most RT is monotypic Silver fir. Are interplanting these.
9. Is there a greater need to increase diversity and shift our focus/funding?
  - a. RT has the largest footprint.
  - b. Resources – most of the funding is in the RT area, not in the planting.
  - c. [Need to talk to staff about potential re-allocation of resources \(more to planting\).](#)
10. Need to be open-minded about this, keep thinking. On National Forest lands, talking about some regeneration harvest to get more diversity/resilience into the landscape. NOT clearcutting. Important processes going on then. Not advocating for CRMW. But need to be open-minded.

4. Need to add a 4<sup>th</sup> one – ***Wildlife Management as it relates to the MIT settlement agreement and the HCP***

- a. Now there's an unhealthy relationship with WDFW and MIT & city re: the wildlife management part of MIT settlement agreement.
- b. Managing for early successional species could be incompatible with the HCP.
- c. Could be a conflict if we switch from accelerating old-growth to managing for early successional species.
- d. Settlement agreement has a provision – must be consistent with the HCP. Working with tribal biologists to make it consistent.
- e. WDFW thinks it could be compatible.
- f. We are only making small gaps (not 20 ac). The HCP does have flexibility.
- g. What are the tribes interested in? Elk/deer?

- i. It is more than just hunting – it's also gathering.
- ii. Staff is working with the tribe on gathering.
- h. [Can the OC get a report on this?](#)

### **Instream flow Section**

- Nothing that needs attention in short term. Meeting/exceeding commitments.
- [Some metrics that could be added to the website, make them more user friendly. Had to pull out data of the annual reports.](#)
- That would raise the profile on the website.
- A couple of years ago Steve Ralph and Derek Booth made some recommendations for hypotheses to be tested. Status of that?
  - SPU just launched a \$500,000 project with USGS.

### Long-term section – focus on climate change

- Focus on the supplemental flows (not the guaranteed minimal flows).
- Distribution of normal years may be changing.
- Frequency, pattern of supplemental flows could change. May need to change the timing of the flows in the future. Need to make sure they provide the function we want.
- There are supplemental flows in spring, summer, fall.
  - Spring – depends on winter. No evidence on trends in that.
  - Seeing a clear trend of decreasing flows May to July. This has implications for future summer and fall supplemental flows.
  - Climate models – are usually precipitation neutral, but the timing will change.
  - [OC recommends prioritizing summer/fall period to look at climate change.](#)
- Unallocated water
  - The guaranteed flow = minimum flow plus the supplemental flows. The IFC is focusing on “unallocated water” (that portion between the guaranteed flows and the municipal water).
  - We only have partial control over unallocated water.
  - Example last spring – 5 different artificial freshets after huge snowpack, wet spring.
  - If the unallocated water starts to go away, that will be a major concern.

### ***Discussion about flood control.***

- Lower Cedar folks believe SPU thinks fish are more important than people.
- It would be wise for SPU to have something public that states concern for human safety.
- Need to work with Cedar River Council.
- Their perception is that SPU holds water to make money.

### **Landsburg Section**

- Just starting to draft.
- All commitments met.

### Summary Section

- Summary of all recommendations.
- It would help to increase access to the briefing materials. Consider a place to stockpile them – would allow the OC to keep up (rather than email attachments).

### Schedule for OC reviewing the draft

- Want comments within a week
- Want to wrap up final draft within 2 weeks
- OC wants to review the final draft
  - Richard will email it out
  - Will have 7-10 days to comment
- Plan to wrap up early in 2010
- Final form – a letter under Richard’s signature as an OC representative, addressed to Ray Hoffman, SPU acting director.

### Independent Review of HCPs Report

- Cedar River was included – favorable review
- Have pdf.
- Cyndy will distribute to OC

### Website review

- Most OC members will review independently and get comments to Cyndy
- Initial comments
  - Add water quality metrics
  - Add instream flow metrics and Landsburg metrics sections to the list of measurements page
  - Establish links from instream flow and Landsburg pages to the fish species pages, where appropriate.
  - Establish links from appropriate fish species pages to the instream flow and Landsburg pages.
  - Think about using Goggle Earth for folks to view the watershed.
    - Steve will send a link of an example from one of their public clients. SPU can review and see if it might be helpful to add to our website.
      - Stillwater could likely add this functionality for \$5,000 – \$10,000
      - They have an expert we could do a phone consult with.