

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

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Members attending:

Richard Bigley
Walt Canter
Jim Erckmann
Bob Everitt
Cyndy Holtz
Chris Konrad
Matt Longenbaugh
Bill Robinson
Tim Romanski
Buck Smith
Isabel Tinoco
Frank Urabeck
Corey Weathers
Jean White

Staff attending:

Liz Ablow
Dave Beedle
Paul Faulds
Suzy Flagor
Amy LaBarge
Brent Lackey
Rand Little
Sally Nickelson
Dwayne Paige

Others in attendance:

Aaron Bosworth
Randy MacIntosh
Judy Blanco

This Oversight Committee meeting was held at the Renton Community Center.

Approval of minutes of May 23, 2011 - The Oversight Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2011 with the following corrections:

- Addition of Jean White as attendee
- Reference to Oversight Committee agreement to direct SPU staff to add a metric for steelhead population trends to the HCP web site.

HCP Progress Evaluation: Review recent accomplishments and metrics reported on HCP web site – Reviewed HCP web site architecture. The following input was provided by OC members:

- On fish metrics, include numerical values on bars of graphs to show abundance in addition to percentages that graphs currently convey
- Graph showing the annual number of natural origin and hatchery origin Chinook spawning in the Cedar
- Positive feedback on separation of metrics based on geographic influence (HCP, river, regional)
- Positive feedback on explanation of differences observed in Chinook emigration timing
- Website is used to benchmark similar work in WDNR
- Suggestion to add an index of all documents available on the web site

- Suggestion to provide “new” links to newly added material on the home page
- Dwayne Paige provided a more detailed overview of metrics and information related to Pygmy Whitefish studies and a temperature model developed to predict temperature changes in the thermocline with lake level fluctuations

Stream Crossings Program Overview – Dave Beedle presented an overview of the program commitments, accomplishments, and remaining work.

Cedar River Sockeye Hatchery Adaptive Management Program - Brent Lackey briefed the Committee on SPU’s implementation of the Sockeye Hatchery Adaptive Management Plan.

Discussion:

- Housing UW data on SharePoint site, and plans for longer term relational database for Lake Washington sockeye
- Hatchery’s performance expectations for specific time periods into the future and long term monitoring plan; multi-decade study design
- Governance structure and roles of Adaptive Management Work Group, Technical Work Group, key SPU staff members
- Study areas related to concerns raised in legal challenges

Invasive Species in the Upper and Lower Cedar River Watershed – Sally Nickelson, SPU, and Judy Blanco, Forterra, provided overview of efforts to control invasive plant species in the watershed. Discussion:

- Upgrading the category of knotweed as a noxious weed to compel property owners to allow treatment on their land
- City Council approval of herbicide use in the watershed, and follow-up water quality monitoring; multi-year treatments
- Techniques for replanting, and clearing dead knotweed stalks
- Funding for downstream program (grant-funded)
- Receptiveness of private property owners (70%); replanting increases cooperation
- Knotweed characteristics that contribute to its aggressiveness

Oversight Committee meeting schedule and comprehensive review schedule –

Discussion:

- Committee agreed by consensus to continue meeting twice each year, but that June meetings would be dedicated to field meetings, and December meetings would be business meetings conducted indoors.
- Committee agreed by unanimous vote to recommend to the Parties of the HCP Implementation Agreement to revise the Comprehensive Review Schedule as follows: Skip the 11-Year Comprehensive Review, then conduct subsequent reviews at five-year intervals, with the next review to be conducted at the end of HCP Year 15, then 20, etc.

Watershed Report by Friends of the Cedar River Watershed - Corey Weathers, Acting Executive Director of the Friends of the Cedar River Watershed, explained the Friends’ partnership with local schools to provide watershed education. He played a portion of the 2011 Watershed Report, a video production by local high school students, demonstrating the program’s effectiveness and value.

Update on NMFS TRT Draft Report on Puget Sound Steelhead - On November 4, the NMFS TRT for the ESA listing of Puget Sound steelhead released the draft Historical Population Structure of Puget Sound Steelhead Report. This draft report documents the TRT's efforts to identify historical demographically independent populations of steelhead in Puget Sound. The report identifies Cedar River steelhead as a distinct population within the Central and South Puget Sound Major Population Group. Discussion ensued about the decline of the Cedar River steelhead. It was pointed out that the role of Cedar River steelhead in recovery of the Puget Sound DSP is not yet clear since NMFS has not yet initiated development of a recovery plan. The process for developing a recovery plan is still under consideration. SPU's steelhead recovery responsibilities associated with the utility's land and water management activities in the Cedar River basin will be covered by the commitments in the HCP. The HCP anticipated this listing and includes steelhead as a covered species. In response to several questions about resident rainbow trout in the Cedar River, Matt Longenbaugh indicated that the linkages between resident and anadromous *O. mykiss* are still under consideration.

Adjournment - At noon the meeting was adjourned.