

**WRIA 1 SALMON RECOVERY PLAN DEVELOPMENT
STAKEHOLDER GROUP
MEETING SUMMARY**

Date: October 29, 2003
Time: 7:01 p.m. – 9:04 p.m.
Place: 2nd Floor Conference Room, Whatcom County Public Works
322 N. Commercial Street, Bellingham, WA

AGENDA

1.	Welcome
2.	Introductions
3.	Approve meeting summary from September 30, 2003
4.	Stakeholders Group Advisory Role
5.	Technical Foundation : Salmon Habitat in WRIA 1
6.	Community Issues : Questions/Dialogue <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify Community values, issues and concerns related to habitat.2. Identify areas, actions project type and projects related to habitat that have community support.3. Identify where it will be necessary to build community support for habitat projects.
7.	Meeting Feedback Form

MEETING ATTENDANCE

Stakeholder Group members

Henry Bierlink, Agriculture Caucus
Leo Bodensteiner, Western Washington University
Jeremy Brown, Washington Trollers
Mary Dickinson, Land Development Caucus
Kristin Fredericks, WA State Dept of Transportation
John Gillies, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dale Griggs, Citizen
Richard Haard, Salmon Habitat Citizens Advisory Committee
Jim Hansen, Salmon Habitat Citizen Advisory Committee
Mark Henderson, Department of Ecology
David Hooper, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
Jim Jorgensen, Puget Sound Anglers
Joe Kelly, Fourth Corner Fly Fishers
Hugh Lewis, Washington Trout
Scott McCreery, Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee
Fred Polinder, Ag/FCZD CAC
Skip Richards, Non-Government Water Systems Caucus
Todd Rightmire, Trout Unlimited
Rebecca Schlotterback, PUD #1 of Whatcom County
Mike Stoner, Port of Bellingham
Vern VandeGarde, Bertrand CIDMP
Bert Webber, Salmon Habitat Citizens Advisory Committee
Richard Whitmore, Forestry Caucus

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Member of Public/Alternate

Shannon Moore, WA Salmon Commodities Commission

Members Absent

George Boggs, Whatcom Conservation District

Chip Hilarides, Georgia-Pacific

Kristian Warfel, Puget Sound Gillnetters, WA Salmon Commodities Commission

Guests

Jeff Chalfant, Whatcom County

Paula Cooper, Whatcom County

Clare Fogelsong, City of Bellingham

Darrell Gray, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association

Steve Seymour, WA Dept of Fish & Wildlife

Alan Soicher, Nooksack Natural Resources

Scarlet Tang, Whatcom County

Staff and Contractors

Ned Currence, Nooksack Natural Resources

Lisa Kaufman, Whatcom County Water Resources

Anne Krancus, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Assoc

Wendy Scherrer, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Assoc

John Thompson, Whatcom County Water Resources

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- Agenda for October 29, 2003 Meeting
- Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary from September 30, 2003
- Brian Collins Executive Summary from *Historical Riverine Dynamics and Habitats of the Nooksack River*, accompanied by four figures: Lower Nooksack River 1880, 1998 & Nooksack River 1880, 1998
- WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Stakeholder Group: Pre-Questionnaire, Summary of Responses
- Stakeholders Group Meeting Follow-Up, Summary of Responses
- Relevant Documents for WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Plan Development
- History of Salmon Recovery in WRIA 1: Habitat Projects 1986-2002, Nooksack Recovery Team
- State of Washington: An Outline for Salmon Recovery Plans
- Steering Committee Meeting Summary from September 3, 2003
- Stakeholders Group 10/29/2003 Meeting Follow-Up
- Web Page information, Whatcom Salmon Recovery: Habitat
- WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan – The Habitat Element: PowerPoint Presentation

MEETING SUMMARY:

Welcome

Wendy Scherrer welcomed the Stakeholder Group and set the agenda for the evening.

Introductions

Introductions were made by the 35 participants.

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Approve Meeting Summary from September 30, 2003

The Contractor inquired as to if everyone accepted the meeting summary from the Stakeholder Group meeting held on September 30, 2003. One member of the group responded by stating that he/she was not comfortable with a concept stated in the WRIA 1 Salmon Recovery Plan Outline section of the summary: *In general, there will be no specific population goals for other salmonids at this time; rather, if goals are met for listed species, this protection and restoration of habitat forming processes will benefit multiple species.* The member believes that this is not a scientific statement and disputes the concept that what is good for one species is good for all species.

The County responded that the member's concern of listed species vs. multiple species for population goals was understood. Since the statement was more a disagreement with what was stated in the summary than a correction, the County representative suggested noting the point, but holding discussion of the point until after the habitat presentation. Then, if the concern had not been addressed, the issue would be worked through.

There were no other changes made to the summary by members of the group.

Stakeholders Group Advisory Role

The Contractor took a moment to go over the position of the Stakeholder Group as an "advisory" committee. The Contractor gave the following definitions of advisory and elaborated on the role of the group in the salmon recovery plan process:

Advice	a recommendation
Advise	to give information to, to inform, to give advice to
Advisory	recommending actions

The Contractor made it clear that this group is not a decision-making committee, but the job of the group is to bring issues and information to the table in the form of recommendations for the Steering Committee as they write the salmon recovery plan.

A member of the group wanted to know if the group had any influence whatsoever, and if so, is there any assurance of their influence?

The Contractor responded by stating that there is assurance, the ideas of the Stakeholder Group are brought to the Steering Committee in the form of recommendations and summaries of the group's meetings.

Technical Foundation: Salmon Habitat in WRIA 1

The County gave a presentation on salmon habitat in WRIA 1; the document *WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan – The Habitat Element*, contains a printout of the PowerPoint presentation.

The presentation focused on habitat in WRIA 1 and gave an in-depth overview of WRIA 1 and its different geographic areas (Forks, Mainstem, Nooksack Lower Mainstem & Estuary, Independent Coastal Streams, Marine Nearshore).

The salmon population status review by NMFS of west coast salmon (1990-1998) encompassed 52 populations in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California. 26 of these populations were recommended to be listed as threatened or endangered. The Puget Sound chinook are one of

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the 26 populations listed. The reason that a 'look' at habitat in WRIA 1 is so imperative is that our local chinook, and other salmon, populations mirror the regional declines in salmon populations

The ESA recovery planning is based on maintaining/restoring viable salmonid populations and properly functioning (habitat) conditions (PFC). "PFC consist of sustained natural habitat-forming processes that are needed for long-term survival of species." Habitat forming processes include: 1) riparian vegetation succession (shade, leaf litter, wood debris), 2) bedload transport (sediment load), 3) precipitation runoff (a changed surface hydrology of the basin), and 4) channel migration (is the river connected to the floodplain or held in place by levees). The presentation directed the groups' attention to the needs of fish: cold, clean, complex & connected. In order to determine if a system has properly functioning conditions, it is best to acknowledge if the system can sustain the fish's needs.

The presentation gave a geographic overview of WRIA 1. Following is a table summarizing the predominant land-use, salmon present, habitat concerns, and actions for WRIA 1 elements.

Geographic Areas of WRIA 1	Predominant land use	Examples of Salmon present	Habitat concern	Action
North Fork Nooksack	Forest management	chinook, coho, bull trout, sockeye	Mass wasting LWD-loss Increasing development	Riparian planting LWD placement Restore fish passage Road storm proofing
Middle Fork Nooksack	Forest management Rural residential Bellingham's water supply	ESA stocks of chinook and bull trout	Mass wasting LWD-loss Seasonal low flow	Restore passage over diversion dam Flow management LWD placement Riparian restoration Road storm proofing
South Fork Nooksack	Rural residential Agriculture	ESA stock of chinook and bull trout River-type sockeye	LWD loss Channel-shortening & bank hardening Loss of pools	Reach-scale project planning Riparian planting LWD placement Road storm proofing
Mainstem Nooksack	Agriculture Ferndale water supply	Transportation & rearing chinook & chum spawning	Dikes/levees disconnect Poor riparian buffer Channelization	Habitat/pop assessments Wria 1 planning Riparian restoration Flood planning & projects
Lower Nooksack & Estuary	Agriculture Public	Rearing habitat to all salmonids	Floodplain & estuary disconnected Instream habitat structure Lacks riparian function	Flood planning Major acquisition area
Coastal Drainages	Agriculture Cities Rural residential	Multiple salmonid species use	Water quantity & quality Fish passage Channelization Lacks riparian function	Riparian planting LWD placement Wetland protection & restoration Stormwater control Culverts/fish passage
Nearshore		Juvenile salmon	Shoreline armoring & fill Railroad Docks & piers Stormwater	Habitat assessment Forage fish assessment Creosote log removal Habitat restoration

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*The technical foundation underlying the actions taken to date has involved the following: 1) identify stocks, determine status, 2) prioritize stocks, 3) determine limiting factors, watershed

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processes, 4) determine measures to improve stocks, 5) ID and prioritize actions and geographic areas.

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Community Issues: Questions/Dialogue

Following the County's presentation the floor was opened for questions and discussion.

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A member of the group wanted to know if the "scale" of what needs to be done in WRIA 1 is known, and if so, what needs to be done, ultimately? What is the scale of things, do we stay the course or do we need to shift in magnitude?

The Contractor responded that a look at properly functioning conditions, analysis of historical conditions (e.g. Brian Collins work), and on the ground experience of what chinook need and use is the best judgment of the former conditions that we need to aim for. Ecosystem Diagnosis & Treatment (EDT) is software that is used to evaluate possible chinook production based on current versus properly functioning conditions in our area. The EDT model uses the following biological rules: 1) current production estimates & capacity, 2) presumed historic conditions, and 3) properly functioning conditions (PFC). EDT is the benchmark for habitat restoration. PFC is key to habitat conditions; there is an appreciable amount of improvable conditions in WRIA 1 according to EDT. On a "scale" of what needs to be done in WRIA 1, there is a large amount of work necessary in order to return to a properly functioning system.

A member of the group stated that marine/nearshore does not have nearly the amount of effort put toward it as the upper streams do. The member did not feel the connectivity issue has been fully explored, as species need to move through the entire system. The member would like to see more effort put towards the marine and nearshore component of the system.

A member of the group wanted more information on the diversion dam on the Middle Fork Nooksack. A guest to the group responded with a brief history of the dam (nearly total blockage of the Middle Fork since 1960) and the current involvement of the Army Corps of Engineers in the plan for removal of the dam, a fish ladder, or an alternative diversion design that provides for fish passage. It is speculated that building will begin in 2005. A member of the group wanted to know about the historic salmon population prior to the diversion, and if there was a historic record. The Contractor responded that there are reports of salmon in 1921, but no quantification of numbers, in 1940 of chinook and coho, and general reports of pink, bull trout, chinook, coho and steelhead.

The Contractor prompted a discussion about flood issues in WRIA 1. A guest to the group responded with the general method/approach of how floods are dealt with on the Nooksack. Projects are site specific, and the Whatcom County River and Flood division tries new ideas, some of which work and some of which do not; there are dike failures and bank erosion, he/she states that they attempt to learn through the process. Recently, a hydraulic model of the river, calibrated to three flood events of the Nooksack, has been developed. This model will be useful in developing new tactics for flood management.

The Contractor prompted a discussion about riparian restoration in agricultural land, and the opportunities/challenges/problems that exist. A guest to the group responded that a majority of his experience lies within the lowland tributaries, and the general technique for riparian restoration in these areas is to focus on trying to displace invasive species. Site preparation and planting is also a factor in success rate. The guest noted that there tends to be a greater

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success rate when landowners are compensated for riparian restoration efforts on their property. A member of the group expressed the opinion that a 75-foot buffer is more than is warranted and that science has not shown the cost-benefit for taking cropland and planting trees. The member thought that possibly a 35-foot buffer was more reasonable.

Another member of the group commented on the disparity between the buffer sizes that are required for forestlands under the Forest and Fish Law versus that required for agricultural lands. The member also noted the number of compensation packages, such as the Comprehensive Reserve Enhancement Program, that are available to agriculture and not to forest landowners.

A member of the group stated that we have a "managed system"; he/she wanted to know how we could get to PFC when the system is managed?

The Contractor responded that habitats that are good for fish need to be maintained over time in order to reach PFC. It is a matter of promoting what is good in certain areas, and recognizing that species diversity is good. If some kind of natural process is created that sustains the habitat functions, this will be good in the long run.

A member of the group brought up the topic of land use and development and how the recovery plan ties this in with salmon. A guest to the group responded that sound science, appropriate levels of habitat restoration, and countywide integration of technical concepts (SEPA, Critical Areas, Shoreline Management) will bring about effective science based management – a less one-size-fits-all approach. A guest to the group echoed the former by stating that there is a need for flexibility in the recovery plan and that some components of the plan will need to be treated individually.

Meeting Feedback Form

A Meeting Follow-Up form was distributed at the beginning of the meeting.

Next Meeting Date and Agenda

November 20, 2003 will be the next Stakeholder Group meeting. The focus will be on Hatcheries and Harvest. The Contractor would like all members to bring their questions and issues that they would like to voice at the meeting relating to these two factors and how they may integrate with habitat in the WRIA 1 salmonid recovery plan.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

- The Meeting Follow-Up form answers will be compiled for all group members.
- The web site will be updated with information regarding the meetings being held by groups involved in the recovery planning for WRIA 1.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:04 p.m.