

Nooksack Floodplain Integrated Planning Team
June 28, 2017 Meeting Notes
Whatcom County Central Shop Meeting Room
10 am – 2 pm

Participants:

John Shambaugh (WSDOT), Jack Faulkner (City of Everson), Rollin Harper (Small Cities), Frank Corey (Whatcom Conservation District), Travis Bouma (Whatcom County), Leah Kintner (Puget Sound Partnership), Alan Chapman (Lummi Nation), Lisa Cook (Lummi Nation), Kara Kulhman (Lummi Nation), Gerald I. James (Lummi Nation), Ron Bronsema (Dairyman), Rodney VandeHoef (Dairyman), Scott Hulse (FZDAC), Duane Holden (Whatcom PUD), Gary Goodall (Whatcom County), John Appel (Dairyman), Charles Ifft (USACE), Gabe Ng (WSDOT), Ben Floyd (Whatcom County), Paula Harris (Whatcom County), Dennis Clark (WDNR), Fred Likkel (WIDs), Wendy LaRocque (City of Ferndale), Doug Allen (Ecology), Chad Yunge (Ecology), Seth Ballhorn (WDFW), Matt Mahaffie (WCPDS), Kyla Walters (WCPDS), Andy Wiser (WDPDS), Ned Currence (Nooksack Tribe), Stephen Banham (City of Lynden), Denise Doezema (Whatcom County), Joel Ingram (WDFW), Jim Muck (USFWS), David Radabaugh (Ecology), Scott Bedlington (Farmer), Jeff DeJong (Dairyman)

Facilitation:

David Roberts (Kulshan Services), Nathan Rice (Kulshan Services)

Actions:

1. All – review draft mission, goals and team name proposed in the meeting. Bring ideas for change, if any, to the next meeting.
2. Paula – get Doodle poll out and schedule next meeting in late August or September. Plan for food again.
3. Tribal folks – prepare a habitat overview for our next meeting.
4. Fred and Ag folks – prepare an overview of agricultural interests for our next meeting.
5. David/Nate – get notes out to everyone.

Opening – David Roberts

David welcomed everyone and talked about the process that is planned. After introductions we talked about meeting ground rules.

Meeting Ground Rules:

- Start and end on time
- Silence cell phones
- Be succinct – no long speeches
- No interruptions
- No sidebar conversations
- Be constructive: offer ideas and think outside the box
- Work to understand others' views

- Seek outcomes that benefit all
- Have fun!

A steering committee will develop agendas for these meetings. Participants can provide feedback on meetings to David or process to Paula.

Follow-up to System-wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) – Paula Harris

The SWIF focused on the Nooksack levee systems. A draft SWIF Plan was submitted in March of 2016 and accepted by Corps this May after their comments were addressed. Levees will remain eligible in the PL84-99 program for another two years.

Paula shared comments from the USACE and how they were addressed in the final SWIF plan, and reviewed progress in implementing the capital projects within the SWIF. Paula and Travis Bouma reviewed the status of the Levee Maintenance Program. A meeting will be held to discuss the maintenance plans for the coming year.

Nooksack River Planning Process - David Roberts

David facilitated a discussion of team members in response to the questions below. Comments from individual team members are included to document the varying perspectives of the team members.

1) What will make this process meaningful?

- Quick, efficient, and done
- Most planning processes are focused on people. State and other agencies need to address fish and wildlife concerns and needs.
- The State is interested in protecting fish and wildlife, improving habitat, protecting natural processes, and recovering stocks that have been reduced.
- Ensure that uses of state-owned aquatic land are properly authorized and that environmental protection is addressed during flood management activities.
- Clearly define and agree on outcomes so that we are accountable.

2) What do you hope to accomplish?

- Agriculture is concerned about continuing to farm. Maintain dikes, address flood issues. We are bringing food to the table and trying to make a living. Farming is also good for the land.
- State flood program wants a set of strategies and projects for a multi-benefit approach.
- Salmon recovery and sustainable harvest.
- Integrate flood risk reduction with habitat recovery. Find successful funding strategies that are win-win. We are not getting the funding that we need.
- Public safety is a big concern.
- Flood control subzone implementation is frustrated by lack of funding. Politics takes over and our funding gets pulled. What are our options? Identify new funding sources?
- No comprehensive vision statement of what is being done. Just lots of separate projects. Need a comprehensive plan/vision for the watershed.
- Political will. We need a strategy to get funding that includes a vision to swing the politics in our favor.

- Work within our means if funding doesn't come through. Determine priorities.
- Determine appropriate scale of projects given funding challenges.
- Integrated salmon and flood plan that's more fundable. If we can't figure out how to fund it, there's no point in developing these ambitious plans.
- Legislative engagement to get political support. Otherwise, we are wasting effort.
- If this group says their needs are being met, we probably can get the political will to fund projects.
- We are making choices. Our choice is fish. Others make other choices. Fish have paid a huge cost to our past choices for development, farming, etc. Must be a balance in terms of who pays the cost.

Planning Process Conversation – Paula Harris and David Roberts

Paula gave a presentation that discussed why we are starting this new planning process and how it relates back to the 1999 CFHMP plan and process.

Discussion of flow chart to develop integrated floodplain management plan

- This process will need to consider, be aware of other planning processes
- What is time horizon? Will we consider longer term climate impacts?
- Revise flowchart to better integrate Viable Fisheries Economy

Discussion of mission statement

The team reviewed the mission statement from the previous CFHMP and after much discussion came up with the following as a first draft.

Draft mission statement:

Develop an integrated floodplain management plan for the Lower Nooksack River that will reduce risk to public safety, property, and infrastructure, and support and enhance viable/sustainable/improving agricultural and fisheries economies.

Team members were asked to review this for a future meeting and propose revisions if needed.

Discussion of goals:

1) Plan goals:

We reviewed the goals of the 1999 CFHMP and then drafted the following goals:

- o Reduce risk to public safety
- o Minimize damage to public and private property and to public resources
- o Provide a comprehensive understanding of the river
- o Restore floodplain habitat formation processes and other environmental benefits where possible
- o Build consensus around mutually beneficial outcomes
- o Create a more resilient flood risk reduction system now and in the future
- o Identify and prioritize a list of action items to implement plan

Team members were asked to review the draft goals for a future meeting and propose revisions if needed.

2) Planning Process goals:

- Goals should be SMART.
- Efficient use of time.

Meeting format discussion:

- Monthly or less.
- Doodle polls at least a month in advance.
- Consider setting a regular day of the month after the busy summer.
- 10 am to 2 pm
- Full group and reach level meetings.
- 4- to 5-year planning timeline?
- Include Canadian representative?

Group Name discussion:

The following names for our workgroup were proposed for consideration:

- Nooksack River Floodplain Workgroup
- Nooksack Basin Team
- Nooksack Integrated Floodplain Management Team
- Nooksack Floodplain Integrated Planning Team – FLIP Team

Roundtable Discussion – David Roberts

What is new since SWIF?

- FEMA maps: Revised preliminary floodplain maps become effective September 2018.
 - Nooksack preliminary maps have been pushed back but effective date is the same.
- Municipalities have updated comp plans & SMPs
- Ecology is updating flood guidance – 3-year process
- Floodplains by Design updated guidance will be released soon for the 2017-2019 grant application period.
- Watershed Improvement Districts have been implemented and 3-4 have land in floodplain

Technical Study Overview – Paula Harris

- Geomorphic Assessment
- Habitat Assessment
- Hydraulic Modeling
- Cost benefit analysis – USACE
 - How to incorporate fish, value habitat?
 - Can Cramer help with this?
- Engineering/Design Support

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- USDA technical assistance grant for rural communities may be a funding source

Upcoming meetings – David Roberts

Next meeting will include a geomorphic overview and a habitat overview from tribes. An agricultural perspective would be welcome.

Other interests to be discussed:

- Further discussion of how to define viable ag / fish economies
- Incorporate municipalities' interests
- Broader discussion of the needs of different groups
- How to plan for / address multiple species

Meeting Feedback – David Roberts

The Good:

- Good lunch
- Good discussion
- No fights
- Comfortable, open atmosphere
- Good facilitation
- Inclusiveness

Improvements suggested:

- More tables
- Technical issues
- Let folks write ideas down