

LEQUE ISLAND – STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING #2
Wednesday, April 30, 2014
6:30-8:30 pm
Stanwood Middle School

Meeting Objectives:

Stakeholder Committee members

- are updated on technical work regarding development and analysis of alternatives, and
- have an opportunity to review and provide input on selection criteria to be used to pick preferred alternative.

Committee members in attendance:

Alice Turner, Skagit Audubon
Allen Gibbs, Pilchuck Audubon
Bill Blake, Stillaguamish Watershed Council
Echo Walker, UW Student
Jim Locke, Pheasants Forever
John Edison
Kat Morgan, The Nature Conservancy
Kathleen Snyder, Pilchuck Audubon
Keith Williamson
Kenneth Raedeke
Kevin Plambeck, Juniper Beach Water District
Marlin Greene, Friends of Eide Road
Rick Skiba, WA Waterfowl Association
Steve Aslanian, Skagit Audubon
Timothy Manns, Skagit Audubon

Others attending:

Loren Brokaw, DFW
Ruth Milner, DFW
Doug Hennick, DFW
Belinda Rotton, DFW
Kye Iris, DFW
Steve Liske, Ducks Unlimited
C.K. Eidem, Ducks Unlimited
Hilary Wilkinson, Veda Environmental

Joan Poor, Pilchuck Audubon

Committee members not in attendance:

Ann Bylin, Snohomish County SWM
Bill Vincent
Deborah Knight/Kevin Hushagen, City of Stanwood
Derek Marks, Tulalip Tribes
Henry Lippek/Chuck Hazleton, Stillaguamish Flood Control District
Jason Griffith, Stillaguamish Tribe
Jason Westfall
Jenna Friebel
John Magill
Jon Nelson
Karl Ostrom/Jacob Ostrom, WA Waterfowl Association
Kathleen Herrmann, Snohomish County MRC
Terrance Dunning
Tristan Peters-Contesse, Puget Sound Partnership

Welcome and Introductions

Loren Brokaw from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. He introduced himself and other members of the core project team, including Doug Hennick (WDFW), Ruth Milner (WDFW), Belinda Rotton (WDFW), Kye Iris (WDFW), C.K. Eidem (DU), and Steve Liske (DU). He then introduced Hilary Wilkinson of Veda Environmental who was brought in by the project team to provide neutral, third party facilitation.

Hilary introduced herself and reviewed the meeting objectives and meeting agenda. She shared highlights from the January Stakeholder Committee meeting, including a presentation by Loren outlining the sideboards under which WDFW must operate in pursuing a final design alternative for Leque Island, a presentation providing pros and cons regarding the alternatives that had been developed, and key input by committee members regarding values and future visions for Leque Island. She noted that input shared by the committee helped inform development of the draft selection criteria, which are a key focus of this meeting.

Loren reminded committee members that meeting notes from January were distributed to them via email for review and comment. He received 2 comments: first, a request to compare the area of tidal processes that could be restored on Leque Island in a full tidal restoration scenario to the total tidal restoration target in the Stillaguamish Chinook Recovery Plan (11%) and second, a request to include removal on invasive vegetation as a goal to be considered for future management. These comments were integrated and

the notes were redistributed. No further comments were received, and no comments were made at the meeting, so the notes are considered adopted by the committee.

Project status

Loren then provided a brief presentation about the technical work that has evolved since the last meeting. Highlights include:

- Six design alternatives were developed further based on committee input in January; these six alternatives were handed over to Battelle, the entity contracted by the project team to undertake modeling efforts.
- The six design alternatives include:
 - Do Nothing
 - Levee breach
 - Full Restoration Alternative #1 (remove all dikes)
 - Full Restoration Alternative #2 (remove all dikes but reconstruct partial levee or “finger dike” to allow partial access)
 - Partial Restoration
 - No Restoration
- Coordination with the Stillaguamish Tribe occurred related to modeling of the design alternatives. A future project planned by the Stillaguamish Tribe adjacent to Leque Island will be incorporated into the model.
- Screening criteria and additional considerations were developed

Maps of each of the six alternatives were provided in the meeting.

Loren noted that he would coordinate with the Stillaguamish Tribe, Tulalip Tribes, and City of Stanwood following the meeting to bring them up to speed on tonight’s discussion and to get any additional input they might have. Each of these entities is a key stakeholder but for various reasons were unable to attend the meeting.

Questions related to Loren’s presentation include:

Question #1: Will all parking areas disappear in all of the alternatives? **Response:** No. All alternatives include parking options. The No Restoration and Partial Restoration Alternatives will likely include parking areas at or near their current locations. The other four alternatives will have a parking area near the current parking area on the south side of the highway on the west side of the property. Additional access features will be discussed and developed as the project advances.

Question #2: What is the overall goal? Fish restoration? **Response:** That is one of many identified interests. These are the things that are a major focus of discussion for tonight’s meeting (when screening criteria and additional considerations are addressed).

Question #3: Can existing dike material be reused in the alternatives that include rebuilding levees? **Response:** Yes, it is likely. A geotechnical study completed in 2007 for a previous project effort indicated that onsite materials are suitable for dike construction, provided that they are moisture conditioned and organic-rich soils are removed. Existing dike material is also likely suitable for reuse, although this was not evaluated in the 2007 study and additional analysis will be required to determine this with certainty.

Question #4: How are coordination efforts between WDFW and WSDOT going related to the bridge? **Response:** Coordination continues. WSDOT has included raising the WDFW parking area on the west side of the island that is South of the HWY 532 in the design plans. This parking area will remain accessible after the WSDOT highway project.

Steve Liske (DU) provided an overview of what hydrologic modeling is and how it will be used as an important tool to better understand how each of the six design alternatives will impact salinity, water depth, etc. Highlights include:

- Hydrologic modeling is a numeric model based on certain principles.
- Modeling is a tool that can help answer questions related to each of the six design alternatives.
- Modeling can predict certain outcomes, including:
 - Salinity
 - Water depth
 - Bed shear (scouring of the river bottom)
- With this information, biologists and others can begin to better understand what kind of habitat will result from the different design scenarios, which species will benefit, what kinds of problems can be expected, etc.

A question and answer period followed the presentation. Questions (and responses) include:

Question #1: Who is the contractor? **Response:** Battelle (also known as Pacific Northwest National Lab, or PNNL)

Question #2: Have criteria been developed for the modeling? **Response:** Selection criteria have been developed, and we will expand on that topic later in the meeting. The results of the modeling will help us apply the selection criteria to each of the six design alternatives that will be modeled. For example, the model will tell us whether or not any of the alternatives are expected to cause erosion on neighboring properties and the types of habitat we can expect.

Question #3: Is the traditional flow (past 50 years) of the Stillaguamish River going to change as a result of these scenarios? **Response:** We don't anticipate that any of the alternatives will cause a change in river flow volume. The model results will tell us

whether or not any of the alternatives are predicted to alter the location of the river channel.

Question #4: Will climate change impacts be modeled? **Response:** Yes. The model will incorporate sea level rise predicted through the year 2070.

Question #5: Is restoration of the historic Stillaguamish delta/estuary a consideration? **Response:** Yes – 5 of the 6 design alternatives that will be modeled include an estuarine restoration component.

Question #6: Why might it be beneficial to have a finger dike? **Response:** If the model predicts that the full dike removal scenario causes the river channel to migrate in a way that negatively impacts upstream and adjacent properties or is otherwise undesirable, the addition of a finger dike may prevent this from happening. Additionally, a walking trail on top of the finger dike could provide an avenue for recreation access.

Screening Criteria and Additional Considerations

Loren provided an overview of the screening criteria and “additional considerations” that have been developed since the last meeting and explained their function. Namely, the “screening criteria” reflect that minimum requirements that a design alternative must meet in order to be considered any further. The “additional considerations” will be used as a guide once a design alternative has passed the “screening criteria” screen. Both the criteria and additional considerations will be used as a tool by WDFW in the process to select the final alternative.

A handout with both screening criteria and additional considerations was distributed.

Loren shared that these criteria and considerations were informed by input at the first Stakeholder Committee meeting. They reflect broad interests including enhancing opportunities for wildlife viewing, photography, hunting, education, access and recreation, as well as restoring habitat for salmon and migratory birds. Note: this is not a comprehensive list.

A discussion and Q and A session followed. Highlights include:

Question #1: Will there be opportunities for minor tweaks and adjustments to the design alternatives based on modeling efforts? **Response:** Yes, we will be able to make changes after the modeling report is completed.

Question #2: What are the likely funding sources, and what does WDFW mean when they say that a funding option needs to be identified? Does this mean secured, or just likely to be secured? **Response:** WDFW needs to have some confidence that funding

can be secured to pursue an alternative. It does not mean funding needs to be in place – rather, that a high level of confidence exists.

Question #3: What are the strings attached to the land purchase? **Response:** Leque Island was acquired by WDFW in several phases of land purchases involving several different grant sources. The land purchased to the north of where the setback dike is proposed in partial restoration alternative was used as a source of a “match” contribution to secure additional lands in the region. Language in that grant application indicated that WDFW intended to plant farmed forage for snow geese on that portion of the island. If WDFW proposes to change management of that portion of the island to another use (such as tidal estuary), then WDFW needs to clarify with the fund source whether or not there will be any requirements to comply with the language in the original grant.

Question #4: Are there any contractual obligations regarding tillable land? **Response:** No. Originally, snow goose forage was the driver.

Comment: WDFW should consider prioritizing the various considerations – each stakeholder would weigh them differently so this should be done. (a related comment was also made – namely, that the Stillaguamish Watershed Council has a technical and social screening approach that they have used successfully and that could be applied here). **Response:** For various reasons, WDFW does not want to numerically quantify the selection criteria/considerations or rank certain considerations higher than others. WDFW intends to create a matrix and complete an analysis of how each design alternative that survives the first selection criteria screening will impact a particular consideration. This analysis will be compiled in a report, and the conclusion in the report will likely be the basis for the WDFW regional project team’s recommendation of a preferred alternative.

Question #5: How close are you to having a dollar figure for each alternative? **Response:** We do not yet have dollar figures for each of the six alternatives. More information is needed before having cost estimates. More important than having cost estimates for each alternative is having a funding source identified that will likely pay for construction. WDFW will complete this analysis before selecting the preferred alternative.

Question #6: Most of the alternatives appear to rule out using the site as a pheasant release site. True? **Response:** Yes – 4 of the 6 alternatives would not be compatible with releasing pheasants. WDFW is interested in providing an alternative location for pheasant release, but a source of funds for acquisition and a suitable location with a willing seller must be identified.

Comment #1: A few committee members suggested that visitor safety should be considered when selecting the final alternative. Some designs may be inherently safer

for visitors than others and/or able to be more easily managed for multiple uses on the site.

Comment #2: A committee member suggested that a restroom would be a popular addition to the site.

Comment #3: A committee member suggested that if pheasant hunting is not compatible with the alternative that is selected, then replacement opportunity should be provided prior to construction.

Wrap up and next steps

Loren thanked committee members for attending and shared what the next steps will be in the process. Specifically:

- Battelle will conduct modeling for each of the 6 design alternatives. Preliminary results should be available by the end of June.
- A final report on the modeling results will be completed by the end of August.
- A Stakeholder Committee meeting will be held in early Fall to discuss the results of the modeling and the findings in the final report.
- Following the fall Stakeholder Committee meeting, there will be a public meeting to share each of the design alternatives that made it through the modeling process and to explain the modeling results. This meeting will also enable the project partners to get public input prior to selecting the preferred design alternative.

Based on these meetings and input from the committee and from the public, WDFW will then begin the process of selecting the final alternative.

Hilary provided a quick recap of the night's meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

ADDENDUM

LEQUE ISLAND – STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Friday May 9th, 2014

10:30 am – Noon

Stanwood City Hall

City of Stanwood and Stillaguamish Flood Control District staff were unable to attend the Stakeholder Committee meeting on April 30th due to scheduling conflicts with other meetings. At the Stakeholder Committee meeting, Loren proposed that he would offer to present the meeting materials to the City, provide opportunity for input on selection criteria, and add capture input in an addendum to the April 30th notes.

Meeting Objectives:

City of Stanwood and Stillaguamish Flood Control District staff:

- are updated on technical work regarding development and analysis of alternatives, and
- have an opportunity to review and provide input on selection criteria to be used to pick preferred alternative.

Attendees:

Deborah Knight – City of Stanwood

Kevin Hushagen – City of Stanwood

Ryan Larsen – City of Stanwood

Chuck Hazleton – Stillaguamish Flood Control District

Loren Brokaw – WDFW

Belinda Rotton – WDFW

Summary Overview:

Loren went through the same presentation materials presented at the Stakeholder Committee meeting. This included a project status update, a basic description of the

modeling work, presentation of the six design alternatives that will be modeled, and presentation of the draft list of design screening criteria and additional considerations that will assist WDFW in selecting the preferred alternative design.

Input from the City and Flood Control District:

Both groups emphasized the importance of maintaining drainage of the river into Port Susan Bay for the City's water treatment system and for flood control of upstream properties. Chuck is concerned about sedimentation in the river channel and suggested that pilot channels may need to be incorporated in the plans in any areas that will be proposed to be opened to tidal processes. He suggested that pilot channels could provide an avenue for sediment transport away from the river channel. **Response:** The hydrodynamic modeling will tell us where we'd expect deposition and scour for each of the six alternatives. One of the screening criteria for selection of the preferred alternative is to not negatively impact neighboring properties. If modeling shows that there is potential for sediment deposition or erosion to impact drainage or flooding of nearby properties, then the design will not be eligible or will need to be modified to eliminate that threat.

The City of Stanwood requested that if recreation access opportunities are displaced by the project, that they be replaced locally. **Response:** WDFW intends to work with the Stakeholder Committee to identify recreation/access features that can be added to the preferred alternative project design so that recreation opportunities will continue to be provided onsite to the extent practicable. The City and WDFW also agreed that they should work together to explore how the Leque site and an adjacent property that the City will likely own in the future can complement each other for recreation opportunities.