

**July 20, 2005**

## **Clover Creek Habitat/Floodplain Restoration Project July 19, 2005 Public Meeting/Open House Summary**

### **Meeting Attendees**

Thirty-eight community members attended the Clover Creek Habitat/Floodplain Restoration public meeting and open house on July 19, 2005. The workshop included representation from:

- Parkland/Spanaway residents
- Chambers – Clover Creek Watershed Council
- Washington Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- Pierce County Water Programs staff
- Jones and Stokes staff

### **Project Team Attendees**

- Ingo Kuchta, Pierce County
- Dave Renstrom, Pierce County
- Damon DeRosa, Pierce County
- Janine Redmond, Pierce County
- Brian Higgins, Jones & Stokes
- Melinda Posner, Jones & Stokes
- Ann Rennick, Jones & Stokes

### **Public Meeting/Open House Purpose**

The purpose of the public meeting/open house was to provide an introduction about the habitat/floodplain restoration project, answer questions from the community, hear their concerns and get input and ideas. Key agenda items included:

- Open house with informational displays and maps;
- Welcome and introductions;
- Review of meeting format, agenda and ground rules;
- Presentation on the history of Clover Creek and general phasing plan for improvement along Clover Creek; and
- Questions and comments.

### **Open House**

Information stations and posters focused on the following:

- **General information** – information related to the project and website, staff's contact information, comment cards, and background documents.
- **Invasive Plant Species** – information related to the benefits of restoration efforts along Clover Creek and four existing invasive species were highlighted.
- **Historical Timeline**—A display showing the history of creek was developed based on a document by Professor Fred Tobiason and oral interviews he conducted regarding the history of Clover Creek.

- **Aerial Photograph**—A large display of the project area was available for public view and writing of comments. Attendees identified (with dots) where they live along the Creek.

### **Welcome/Introduction**

Melinda Posner welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the project team, and provided a quick overview of the meeting format and ground rules.

### **Formal Presentation**

Ingo Kuchta presented an overview of the history of Clover Creek, including background on the Clover Creek Basin Plan. Ingo described the project area and indicated that county staff, along with the county's consultant Jones and Stokes, would be working with interested community members to develop a conceptual restoration plan for the project area. Once the restoration plan is developed, the county's long-term plan is to do phased improvements for the entire stream reach from the confluence with North Fork to Brookdale Golf course.

Brian Higgins provided information about Jones and Stokes' staff capabilities and emphasized that in addition to the scientific expertise that staff has, the restoration project will require the input and participation of the residents and stakeholders along the creek, especially their ideas and historical knowledge.

Participants were asked how they had heard about the meeting. Approximately eight had read about it in the newspaper, three to four by word of mouth/neighbor, two to four from email, and the rest (20+) had heard about the meeting from the County's newsletter/mailer.

### **Question and Answer**

Meeting attendees had the opportunity to ask questions. The general comments and responses were recorded on flip charts. Below is a summary of the facilitated discussion. (*Q: question, C: comment, R: response*) *Except where otherwise noted, county staff and Jones & Stokes provided the responses.*

**Q:** What about the flume --where was it?

**R:** It is thought to have originated in the area of Canyon Road near the headwaters of Clover Creek. County staff has reviewed historical records and, as far as they can tell, while a flume was considered it was never actually built.

**Q:** What is the ultimate goal of this project? Is it specifically focused on salmon recovery?

**R:** This project has several goals including improved floodwater capacity and restoration of habitat for a variety of native species along Clover Creek. This project is not solely focused on bringing salmon back to Clover Creek. There are some constraints as to how far the county can go in furthering this goal. There are existing fish passage barriers further down stream from the project area that limit salmon from returning to this reach of Clover Creek. However, this project is still beneficial to other wildlife and resident fish species as well as improving floodwater capacity.

Specific goals and objectives will be included in the restoration plan and will come from citizen input as well as from the consultant and county perspective.

- C:** Steilacoom Lake was Clover Creek before it was a lake and fish had a straight run up the creek.
- C:** Clover Creek doesn't dry up every year. We used to catch trout in it every summer.
- C:** Clover Creek started going dry when the vertical wells were constructed some time ago near or on Dr. Dietrich's property. Leland Weaver indicated that he knew the engineer that constructed the vertical wells that were placed along Clover Creek.
- C:** Worried about the impact on wells in the area if there is any large-scale digging from the project.
- C:** Since this project is occurring in "Parkland," this project should include a park component. The community would like to have a natural park, not a formally developed park, with public access to creek. This would increase land value. Also interested in pathways and water features such as ponds and lakes.
- C:** Would like to see a sign on County land (at 138<sup>th</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave E) that says it is a habitat/floodplain restoration area.
- C:** Concerned about county-purchased land that has chain link fencing and no trespassing signs. That signage is very negative would like to see something else.
- C:** Concerned with the fact that homeless and criminals are going into county-owned homes.
- C:** Concerned about newly purchased county owned homes not being maintained and becoming drug houses.
- C:** All County-owned properties need to be better maintained and cleaned up.
- R:** County staff will notify maintenance staff to address these issues. Currently, the County is working to get demolition permits approved but this process has taken longer than anticipated. Residents should contact the police immediately if they suspect any suspicious activity. If residents have concerns about signage, weed control, or other issues associated with these properties or this project, they should contact Ingo Kuchta at (253) 798-6165
- Q:** What's going to happen in the hop field area?
- R:** There are no specific plans for this area yet. Based on data obtained by the consultant and input from residents, the County will develop potential options to be considered in the restoration plan for that area and bring them back to the community at a future meeting.

- Q:** The County has purchased homes near 138<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave - what is the county going to do there?
- R:** Nothing specific has been determined for these sites yet. The restoration plan and community input will help guide the development of potential restoration options at these locations.
- Q:** What is the source of water for Clover Creek?
- R:** Mostly it is from ground water and springs that originate east of Canyon Road and within the Naches Preserve.
- Q:** How much pumping of water out of the creek is taking place currently?
- R:** Staff will be looking at this as part of this project. Much of the soil in this area is “Spanaway Spuds,” which includes lots of gravel and doesn’t retain water very well.
- Q:** When I hear restoration I think of salmon. What are we doing here if there is no chance of salmon coming back?
- R:** Restoring salmon is a good objective but there are others – including benefits to other wildlife, improved water quality and flood control – that are all part of a successful restoration project. There is plenty of water upstream for fish, including salmon, but for full salmon recovery, water flow would need to be restored in the lower reaches too as well as the elimination of fish passage barriers.
- C:** There is a poorly maintained fish ladder at the lower end of Steilacoom Lake.
- Q:** Will fish be planted in the creek?
- R:** Private groups have done this in the past. The habitat still needs to be restored to see if it will make a difference in getting salmon to return.
- Q:** What will you do if you find a pond that is not permitted?
- R:** County staff will try to work with the owner to see if there are options they would be willing to consider or alterations that could be made. The County has no plans to tell anyone they must fill their ponds. County staff wants this to be a cooperative effort.
- Q:** How do we find the Clover Creek Water Basin Plan? Can you link it from the project website?
- R:** Its on the County’s website at [www.piercecountywa.org/clover](http://www.piercecountywa.org/clover)
- C:** Restoration is not just about fish. We get just as excited about returning eagles, raccoons, and coyotes. All of these are part of the whole package, and people should not be hung up on just salmon. This is an opportunity to restore community pride and we shouldn’t let it pass us by.
- C:** WDFW is in the process of looking at fish passage barriers downstream from the project area. Salmon recovery is a regional shared strategy for Puget Sound. Salmon recovery is influenced by a fully functioning ecosystem. (*Bob Beckell with WDFW*)

- C:** If there is an issue of water supply, the county should consider combining the creek into one channel. This might also improve overall water supply.
- R:** This will be looked at as part of developing the restoration plan.
- Q:** There used to be more water coming from the North Fork What has happened to change this?
- R:** Development has filled many of the wetland areas, leading to reduced water storage capacity. So now when it rains there is a lot of water but it is not “retained” in the wetlands – which would provide more water to the creek over time. The creek and stream work as a complete system. With the loss of wetlands and floodplains comes loss of habitat.
- C:** Really excited with the energy here tonight—lets have fun and make this a gem! Blackberry Cobbler and ice cream after the work party.
- C:** We need to make sure we get the kids involved.
- C:** This is a great project that can build community a starting point to addressing other social issues in the community.

### **Comment Cards**

- We have two vacant houses next door owned by the county due to this project that are eyesores and places of criminal activity. (Nancy Steele-indicated it was ok to contact her about the project)
- As recently as two weeks ago I had trout fingerlings and an unidentified in the creek by my house. Near Washington High School. I also have possum and raccoon. I’m excited about this project. (Georgette Culp- indicated it was ok to contact her about the project)
- Giant knotweed must be part of the invasive plant educational process. It is an extremely damaging species, which overtakes all others in tenacity, damage to habitat, difficulty to control and rate of growth and expansion.

### **Next Steps**

Project staff will be in contact with interested community members about an August invasive plant removal project.