

## Puyallup River Executive Task Force Summary Notes

**April 8, 2011**

**Port of Tacoma – Fabulich Center**

### Task Force Members

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representatives in Attendance</b>	<b>Unable to Attend</b>
Pierce County Executive Office	Pat McCarthy, Pierce County Executive	
Pierce County Council	Dan Roach, Councilmember Joyce McDonald, Councilmember	
Pierce-County Chamber of Commerce		<i>Invited</i>
Puyallup Tribe of Indians	Sylvia Miller, Councilmember Rory LaDucer, Director of Public Safety Bill Sullivan, Director of Natural Resources Lisa Brautigam, Attorney	
City of Tacoma		Ryan Mello, Councilmember
City of Fife	Carl Durham, Community Development Director	Barry Johnson, Mayor
City of Puyallup	John Knutsen, Councilmember Rob Andreotti, Acting Director of Public Works	
City of Orting	Ken Wolfe, Building Official	
City of Auburn	Chris Andersen, Environmental Protection Manager	
City of Buckley	Pat Johnson, Mayor	
City of Sumner	Bill Pugh, Director of Public Works	Dave Enslow, Mayor
King County	Katy Vanderpool, White River Basin Coordinator	Jeanne Stypula, Supervising Engineer
Port of Tacoma	Clare Petrich, Port Commissioner Robert Brenner, Port Staff	
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)	Camie Bevvv	JoAnn Schueler, Project Development Engineer
Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)		Tom Clingman, Floodplain Manager Alex Callender, Wetland/Shoreland Specialist
Washington State		Derrick Toba, South Puget

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Department of Natural Resources (WSDNR)		Sound Shoreline District
US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)	CJ Klocow, Project Manager Doug Knapp, H & H Specialist	

### **Other Attendees:**

Harold Smelt, Pierce County Water Programs Manager  
Lorin Reinelt, Pierce County Surface Water Management  
Dennis Dixon, Pierce County Surface Water Management  
Brynn Brady, Pierce County Government Relations  
Brian Ziegler, Director, Public Works & Utilities, Pierce County  
Keri Rooney, Pierce County  
Debby Hyde, Pierce County  
Marci Scott, Pierce County  
Gil Hulsman, Abbey Road Group  
Jeff Juel, Porter Brothers  
Penny Mabie, facilitator  
Kristina Walker, note taker

### **Meeting Summary**

#### **Welcome**

The meeting started at 9 a.m. with Penny Mabie, meeting facilitator, welcoming the group.

#### **Brief introductions**

Penny Mabie asked Executive Task Force (ETF) members to introduce themselves. She reminded participants that there would be a period for public comment at the conclusion of the meeting.

#### **Review meeting agenda and ground rules**

Penny Mabie reviewed agenda items, which included updates from the Pierce County Rivers Flood Hazard Management Plan, Pierce County Flood Control Zone District the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers General Investigation Study and inter-local funding agreements, and a discussion about regulatory and land use strategies.

Penny Mabie reviewed the ETF ground rules established at the first meeting, which are as follows:

- Start / end on time
- Silence cell phones
- Come prepared
- Listen respectfully
- Speak from interests, not positions
- Participate in the process

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### **Review Feb. 4, 2011 meeting notes**

Penny Mabie asked whether there were any changes to the draft notes from the previous meeting. Kristina noted that three changes had been sent to her and that those changes had been made. No additional changes were requested; the notes were approved.

### **Flood Control Zone District**

Harold said that the County is moving the process to re-create the Pierce County Flood Control Zone District along and will be doing a State Environmental Policy Act process. They are aiming for getting everything in place for the district by the end of the year. They are working with a consultant and there will be opportunities for public involvement.

Councilmember Joyce McDonald encouraged those in favor of the district to submit positive comments.

Pat McCarthy reiterated that the district is on a good path forward and that it is important that the County create a vehicle to protect property and people.

### **Pierce County Rivers Flood Hazard Management Plan presentation**

Lorin Reinelt, Pierce County Surface Water Management, noted that the Flood Hazard Management Plan advisory committee has reviewed the 30 programmatic recommendations and are now working on the capital projects list. The advisory group is currently working on the 40 proposed projects, and there will also be a workshop. In addition, the Environmental Impact Statement was released and Lorin received comments from agencies, tribes, cities and citizens. Lorin added there is some confusion about where his work fits in with the Flood Control Zone District. There will be a workshop on April 28, 2011 to discuss the advisory group recommendations.

### **Presentation on USGS Study**

Lorin presented the preliminary results on Phase II study: Geomorphic Analysis of the Fluvial Response from Sedimentation Downstream from Mount Rainier, WA. The full presentation is available online on the [Puyallup River Executive Task Force website](#).

#### *Comments and questions*

Ken Wolfe said that there is an interesting video on this topic that can be found on YouTube at [Mount Rainier Debris Flow](#).

John Knutsen asked if the study is looking at how sediment effects shipping and the Port of Tacoma. Lorin said that they have not specifically looked at these but that he has not heard that it has a huge effect. Their focus in this effort is the rivers.

John Knutsen inquired what the next steps are after we have all this information. Harold said that the Washington Floodplain Management Association (WAFM) is meeting soon to start a regional discussion about these issues. Harold said that he would send out the notice for those meetings to the ETF.

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**ACTION ITEM:** Harold will send out the meeting notice for the WAFM discussion group.

John Knutsen expressed concern that the group is spending too much time working on studies and not enough time on getting work done. He specifically noted his concern for the trees on the Puyallup River that are damaging levies. He added that the sediment information presented could have an effect on our public utilities and urged the group to take it seriously. Harold agreed that there is a delicate balance of protecting the river and the people and the property, and that that is why there is a noted need to make sure that the issues are addressed correctly.

Harold noted that there is a vegetation management plan for the Puyallup River that says that any tree 6" wide or more can be removed if seen as harmful. He encouraged attendees to talk to him if they had particular areas of concern.

Lisa said that the discussion about vegetation on levees is a national discussion and that the Corps is involved in it. It is a hot topic and a significant amount of work is being done. Some of the ETF's questions might be answered by that process.

Katy noted that the national conversation has to do with Hurricane Katrina. She added that King County is working on the issue regionally.

CJ said that there are entire teams working on the levee vegetation issue.

Pat McCarthy said that she understood John's concerns but that this group has been working hard on actions and issues. She cited the mitigation on Voight's Creek and the work with the Puyallup Tribe as a great example of the work being done. She added that the projects that Lorin presented are focused on actions.

Joyce asked Harold what the status of the pilot program for gravel removal was. Harold said that Lorin's project is proposing two early action projects. The broader project is separate and the County is currently discussing whether to do an environmental review specifically for the pilot program, or to put money into a habitat renewal plan. He noted that early action projects could be in permitting next summer (2012) with construction in 2013. The environmental review for the pilot project will take at least a year but the County is still in the process of discussing the path forward with regulatory agencies.

Ken noted that dredging used to be easy but the environmental review process has changed and that there are a lot of agencies involved. He encouraged the group to get information about issues to the Washington Association of Flood Plain Managers and noted that the group needs to sit down at the table with the County, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and others to address these issues.

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### **General Investigation (GI) Study update (Corp) and measures**

CJ Klocow, Corps, gave an overview of the Corps' GI Study to date and noted that it is a study that will take time but that the collaboration of the group is making the process more streamlined and he feels it will be successful in the long run. He presented a handout on the study process and noted that it is on schedule to finish on time.

Doug Knapp, Corps, said that he is working on a model with USGS and Pierce County as a starting point. He is calibrating the existing conditions so that they can analyze the effectiveness of the proposed measures. This should be available by the next meeting.

CJ noted that he will be asking for input from the ETF. He added that he will be packaging the measures into alternatives. He said that he's currently working with upper management to move the process forward. A draft is expected by the end of September, the end of the federal fiscal year. The budget is set for this year but funding for next year is not certain. CJ added that the Corps can only spend non-federal money with 50-50 match unless the agreement is amended.

Harold said that Pierce County has contributed the full \$50,000 for this year and that money is in an escrow account for use. He added that the County will be billing jurisdictions on actual expenditures and that invoices will be coming later this year.

### *Questions and comments*

Debby noted that Corps staff cannot lobby for funding but that others can. CJ added that the Corps does have a congressional liaison.

Joyce noted that Pierce County has a delegation going to Washington, DC and that the ETF information is part of what they will be talking about. CJ said that he would provide information to Harold about the contacts for this type of work.

Penny asked if the ETF should provide a letter of support. Joyce McDonald said that that would be great but Harold noted that his department has funding requests in to both senators and that George Walk, Pierce County Government Relations, is putting together a binder to make sure the delegates have the information needed.

John Knuten asked if there is a point in the study that a project could be undertaken and included for funding. CJ said that the Corps cannot officially recommend any action until the study is complete but that the ETF, or local jurisdiction, could take a project and run with it.

CJ presented a preliminary list of measures that the Corps is exploring.

Harold said that there are three goals for the study: economic (national and local) and environmental and asked if national is a priority. CJ replied that yes, regional influences can tip the scales but it is not a primary factor.

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Requirements for measures are:

- Must have non-structural measures
- Measures should address the study goal and objectives
- Can be prescreened prior to design
- Will be designed, sited and combined to make Flood Risk Management Alternatives

CJ encouraged the ETF to start thinking about how measures can be packaged. He added that this is just the list of ideas and the Corps will match these with locations later in the study. CJ asked for additions/issues on each list as he presented them.

### Levee systems

- Construct new levees
- Construct setback levees
- Repair/Improve levees
- Remove/Breach levees
- Construct overtopping levee
- Construct flood walls
- Hardened vegetated buffer

#### *Comments*

No additions were given to this section.

### Channel control

- Channel widening: Increase the width of the channel.
- Channel alignment
- Construct bypass channel
- Construct diversion channel
- Modify bridges/road prisms
- Reconnect wetlands, side channels, and tributaries
- Overbank Storage
- Large woody debris

#### *Comments*

Harold noted that the Channel Migration Zone (CMZ) is a big issue and that CMZ resistant structures are not preventing flooding but they do prevent channel migration. He noted that big rocks can be used. CJ noted that engineered log jams is included in a later section and suggested moving this to the next section on Channel Control.

Jeff suggested adding “German steel sheet pile” in with flood wall.

CJ noted that large woody debris is pretty general now but can get more specific

Harold said that improving levees in place is not appropriate for the lower Puyallup.

# Puyallup River Executive Task Force

## Summary Notes

### Interior Drainage

- Culverts: a) add; b) remove; c) replace; d) upgrade
- Subsurface drainage
- Ground water pumping system
- Creek management with use of gates and pumps

#### *Comments*

Jeff noted that there may be interest in fish-passable levees.

Joyce suggested adding “creek management”, which would include anything you would do that would encourage maintenance of creeks (such as removing brush that stops the flow). Doug noted that might not be in the scope. Harold asked Joyce to talk to him about this specific issue and CJ added that his focus is the main waterways. He added that the Corps, by law, cannot make any more problems with these measures.

Bill Sullivan noted that ground water pumping does not help flooding and should be removed from the list.

Ken said that outfalls can’t discharge during high water events and surface water is an issue, so pumping has to happen over the levees. That might be an opportunity for surface water pumping.

Doug said that they could change the “creek management” bullet to “Interior drainage management”.

### Dredging

- Mainstem dredging
- Spot-dredge
- Gravel bar scalping
- Sediment trap

#### *Comments*

Joyce asked if a sediment trap is as effective as dredging. Doug noted that it is a controlled area and that it would mitigate environmental impacts but it is not as effective. CJ added that the Corps would look at that in the modeling

Pat McCarthy noted that there may be a mentality that we used to dredge all the time and that that’s exacerbated the issue. The pilot program was to say “we’ve done this, and that we know the things that are good and bad.”

Lorin suggested re-titling this section “sediment management.”

Harold suggested that there is an option of environmentally-sensitive gravel management that has a set back levee location and gravel bar but not quite a trap.

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Bill Sullivan said that it only takes 6 to 8 weeks to do the removal for dredging.

Ken said that there is a consensus that Pierce County's maintenance plan includes dredging and that he will work with Pierce County on that.

### Dams

- Construct new dam
- Raise high pool elevation of Mud Mountain Dam
- Raise low pool elevation of Mud Mountain Dam

#### *Comments*

Bill asked if it is possible to regulate the amount of sediment from the dam. Doug said that the third bullet is a way to address that. CJ added that these options are difficult to implement and expensive.

Brian asked if it is possible to manage the flow of water through sediment control dams. CJ said that should be added to the list.

### Non-structural

- Enhance existing roadways
- Install stream gauges (or update)
- Bank stabilization
- Flood warning system
- Response plan for local residents
- Relocate residents
- Agricultural best management practices

#### *Comments*

Lisa suggested adding the federal inability to control land use. Let's learn the lesson that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is learning now. Looking at projects from a litigation point of view, the issues need to be addressed at the forefront.

Harold noted that the Corps will be going through an environmental assessment for each alternative.

Doug said that the Corps will also identify constraints as part of the project. That might be a good place for this.

Chris suggested incentivizing as part of this project, for example, transfer of development rights.

Joyce said she agreed with Chris. She added the County needs to incentivize and get buy-in on this. She added that the County Council is working really hard to make this work.

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The County is providing for proper zoning but has had push back. Harold said that the County could expand relocation of residents but the federal government can't effect local land use. Getting people out of harm's way is the most effective solution.

Lorin noted that in the flood plan draft, the County has included programmatic, education, flood preparedness, mapping, and technical assistance to this category of measures.

Jeff Cox asked if this discussion is about mitigation of structural changes or alternatives to structural changes. CJ said that these suggestions would be in addition to structural changes. They will be packaged together. Harold noted that some of the non-structural solutions could be mitigation.

Pat asked if preservation of agricultural land fit into this category. Harold said that the goal is to minimize flood losses and it is easier to do that if the land is agricultural and not subdivisions. However, it is not a good location for agricultural business to be sustainable either so that is expensive to maintain.

CJ noted that the Corps will estimate what the system is going to look like in 50 years. Economic evaluations will be included in the future conditions report.

### *General comments on the Corps GI Study*

Clare suggested that it would be helpful to look at each of these items with their associated permitting process, time and costs. CJ said that he would like to do that when the Corps does preliminary screening. Right now, that is difficult because these measures are not sited.

Ken said that Orting has \$670,000 for their Callistoga levee set back project and has invested \$1.2 million. He asked if they could discuss possible credit for this project. CJ said that a project initiated before the end of the recommendations cannot be retroactively added for funding.

Ken noted that he has a lot of study information to share with the Corps. CJ added that there is opportunity for in-kind support if the information is usable and can contribute to the study.

Lisa noted that the Puyallup Tribe holds most of the fisheries data for the area and no one has contacted them. Harold said that they haven't talked about this yet and will keep the Tribe in the loop. He added that any request for work in-kind has to go through him as administrator.

**ACTION ITEM:** Penny noted that EnviroIssues will get CJ the notes from beginning of this group.

### **FEMA update**

Harold reminded the group about the lawsuit in which FEMA was sued because of the potential adverse impact on fish. FEMA has released a biological opinion (BO) about mitigating impacts. As a result of the BO, FEMA is establishing new standards for mitigation impacts associated with flood control. Harold noted that the County has known new requirements were coming for a

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long time and FEMA has now set a deadline of September 22, 2011 for all 122 communities in the Puget Sound basin to update regulations.

Jurisdictions have three options:

1. Adopt FEMA model ordinance
2. Go through checklist (provided by FEMA). Pierce County is taking this option
3. Do a biological assessment and review for each and every land use

Pierce County is in the process of doing option number two. Harold and Dennis presented a quick overview of the policies the ETF has discussed so far and gave a brief explanation of what each looks like in terms of the required FEMA update.

Lisa noted that no tribes have been consulted by FEMA although The Puyallup Tribe has asked to talk with FEMA. Harold added that even NOAA Marine Fisheries has not signed off on the FEMA update, but that FEMA is moving ahead anyway.

Dennis reviewed the following sections of the matrix in regards to the FEMA changes:

1. Floodplain Mapping
  - a. Data utilization
  - b. Plan review – data requirements
2. Floodway Regulations
  - a. FEMA floodway
  - b. CMZ floodway
  - c. Deep and fast flowing floodway
3. Floodplain regulations
  - a. Relevant code
  - b. Subdivision of land
  - c. Placement of structures in the flood fringe
  - d. Access
  - e. Substantial damage/improvement threshold
  - f. Zero rise analysis
  - g. Compensatory storage
  - h. Variances

Brian asked what the implications are of not meeting the Sept. 22 deadline. Harold responded that a jurisdiction would risk being removed from the FEMA insurance program.

Lisa noted she believes that even with these changes, FEMA will be in violation of the Endangered Species Act.

Joyce asked if FEMA has fully adopted the new requirements. Harold said that they have approved them as standards.

Dennis noted that it was FEMA that was sued and that the federal government has higher flood standards than local government. The biological opinion was written for FEMA so they

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have to meet the standard. FEMA says to be party to the national flood insurance program; local jurisdictions have to meet federal and state obligations to keep their relationship with FEMA in good standing. But FEMA could still get sued.

Pat McCarthy asked if, since the country has areas that don't meet the minimum standards, will people have to relocate or are existing structures and businesses grandfathered in. Dennis said that the regulations are mostly for new development.

Chris noted that the changes have to be submitted and accepted by September. If not accepted, then a jurisdiction must automatically use the third option. The model ordinance labeled draft – final should be out April 15, 2011. He noted that there are four workshops to go over the biological assessment methodology and approach. The closest is May 2, 2011 in Lacey.

### **Next steps**

Penny noted that the group will plan to pick up the non-structural solutions discussion with Dennis at the next meeting, hear updates from CJ, and continue to hear from Lorin at the next meeting. Gravel removal will be on a future meeting agenda. The next meeting will be scheduled for May 2011.

Penny asked that ETF members email updates to the near-term actions list.

### **Public comment**

Jeff Juel said that he is a former US Army Corps lead designer and noted that on the dredging slide, one alternative for consideration is using woody debris to constrain streams. He recommends Tim Abbey for this work.

### **Local Updates**

Harold mentioned that Washington Association of Flood Plain Managers is planning three workshops for those who would like to learn more about the Community Rating System (CRS).

Ken reported that the Orting City Council approved \$670,000 last month for the Calistooga Levee project and that they should be at 60 percent design by the last week of July. He added that they have secured financing for \$1.7 million for construction. They are also working with Pierce County on property acquisition for that project. They are working with Citizens for a Healthy Bay (CHB) on their National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for stormwater. They are looking at sites on the Carbon River and removing noxious weeds and plantings. He added that they have just purchased a hands-on educational model called EnviroScape that allows kids to set up their town and surrounding area and use best management practices for water maintenance. They will be hosting their emergency preparedness fair in August or September.

Katy Vanderpool, King County, reported that King County had completed 11 residential acquisitions (\$3.6 million) for levee setbacks. It directly relates to Lorin's presentation about the White River where sediment is dropping. They are creating levee setbacks on both sides. The

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structures are up for bid, and they are trying to surplus the houses. They are planning to be done before Thanksgiving. She noted that the project doesn't mean they wouldn't also dredge later. The County Line Project is on schedule to start construction next year. The King County Flood Control District funding issue is at the state level of discussion now. The County is lobbying to move the district up to a senior taxing agency.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**ACTION ITEM:** Harold will send out the meeting notice for the WAFM discussion group.

**ACTION ITEM:** Penny noted that we will get CJ the notes from beginning of the Executive Task Force.