

## **E-Alert from the Puyallup River Executive Task Force**

The Puyallup River Executive Task Force (ETF) met at the Port of Tacoma on Dec. 7, 2009. Topics discussed included updates on current local flood control activities, information on the Pierce County budget, workgroup recommendations on near-term local cost sharing, and a discussion about ETF coordination with state and federal political processes.

Participants provided updates on current flood management activities. Harold Smelt, Pierce County Surface Water Management, also noted the county is working toward the following near-term goals:

- Securing hazard mitigation grant funds and reimbursement for flood protection activities from last year's flood fighting efforts;
- Updating the comprehensive flood hazard management plan and commenting on FEMA's revised flood plain maps;
- Taking first steps to establish a county-wide flood control zone district;
- Receiving a Class 2 (out of 10) rating in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System.

The ETF discussed financing for the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) General Investigation (GI) Study of the Puyallup River. Near-term financing requires a local share of \$500,000 per year for the next three years. A working group comprised of finance experts from local jurisdictions proposed a model that considers floodplain taxable value and major public assets, 2008 general fund budgets, and 2008 census population data to determine each partner's contributions toward the GI study. The ETF supported this model for local municipalities and agreed that other local, non-municipal partners such as the Port of Tacoma, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Washington State Department of Transportation and others be asked to provide fixed contributions, as the model doesn't apply well to their situations. The next step for local funding is for cooperating partners and Pierce County to enter into inter-local agreements to contribute funds based on the approved model.

The ETF discussed next steps for effective coordination with state and federal political delegations and the Corps. Participants stressed the importance of having a unified approach to funding requests. There was agreement to support two high-priority setback levee projects and a county gravel removal study, with participation from the Puyallup Tribe. ETF members agreed to highlight their work through increased media coverage and updates to state and federal delegations.

Major topics for upcoming ETF meetings include the following:

- Inter-local agreement for near-term cost sharing
- Near-term cost shares for non-municipal local partners
- Scope of work for the Corps GI Study
- Non-structural solutions and policies to contribute to long-term flood protection

The next meeting date and location, and a detailed summary of this meeting will be posted on the ETF Web site at <http://www.piercecountywa.org/etf> as it becomes available.