

Draft HCCC ILF Program IRT Meeting Notes
HCCC Poulsbo Office or by WebEx, Hosted by HCCC
May 9, 2013

Attendees: Brad Murphy (Ecology), Cynthia Rossi (PNPTC-Jamestown) Cyrilla Cook (WDNR), Linda Storm (EPA), Donna Frosthalm (Jefferson County), Roma Call (PGST), Steve Todd (Suquamish Tribe), Richard Brocksmith (HCCC), Patty Michak (HCCC), Randy Lumper (Skokomish Tribe), Doris Small (WDFW), Stacy Vynne (PSP), Kathlene Barnhart (Kitsap County), Margaret Clancy (ESA), Christine Stevenson (Navy), Nancy Brennan-Dubbs (USFWS), Stacie Hoskins (Jefferson County)

Notes: Scott Olmsted (ESA)

Meeting Notes Review

September and January meeting notes were reviewed. Edits were made by HCCC based on IRT comments. Notes will be finalized after **(ACTION) HCCC follows up with Gail Terzi to clarify some of her comments (e.g., does the Corps prefer ILF mitigation on public or private lands?)**.

HCCC/Corps are tracking ACTION items that arise during IRT meetings and will update a tracking list based on new actions or when actions have been completed.

Navy Tool Update

The Navy is planning to send a letter to gauge the level of support /interest from IRT members in continuing to test and refine the Navy's nearshore tool, as LCDR Carroll discussed at the January IRT meeting. If there is sufficient support, the Navy will allocate additional funding to field test the Navy Marine Tool. The Navy Marine Tool has been finalized by AECOM. The IRT would like to field test both the interim marine/nearshore tool and the Navy's tool. HCCC needs to conduct field work this summer to test the Interim tool to comply with their EPA grant, but testing of the Navy tool will likely be delayed. Ideally HCCC would like to partner with the Navy to test their tool when ready. The IRT discussed whether they should strategize on a response to the Navy's request for support. The co-chair indicated that he wanted to have the ability to test the tool, alongside the interim nearshore tool, before deciding whether he would support its use. The "final draft" Navy tool documents were sent out to IRT members via email and are available on HCCC's website.

[Note: (added post call) – link <https://hcccwagov.box.com/s/ah7n1ywi4it8d709z6de>]

NMFS has developed and distributed draft guidance on using Habitat Equivalency Analysis (HEA).

ACTION: The IRT would like a presentation on this at a future meeting.

Watershed Characterization Memo Updates

The memos that were initially distributed in January describing how the watershed characterization data was being used to identify potential receiving sites were revised, although not substantially, to reflect comments/suggestions made by the IRT and Ecology (watershed characterization staff) in January/February. Edits included: incorporating Watershed Integrity scores, lowering the freshwater

habitat score threshold to 6 and 5, from 7, assessing restoration/development AUs and associated protection AUs located upstream, assessing local and federal permit/development data. These memos have been finalized and are available for review on HCCC's website [Note: link - <https://hcccwagov.box.com/s/mm8lztc8cwff5nc0p9au>]. The list of priority AUs did not change dramatically as a result of the refinements. The watershed characterization results are 'blind' to factors such as ownership, land use, threat of development, etc. that affect mitigation feasibility—those considerations are important and need to be brought in as an overlay to the characterization results.

Freshwater Roster Areas

HCCC described the process and information that is being used to refine the receiving site selection process—to go from the very coarse scale of AUs to potential sites—as outlined in the Draft Freshwater Roster Area Identification and Prioritization Process memo. This is still a high level exercise based mainly on remote sensing data (GIS layers). We still do not know what type of restoration might be possible or necessary at each site—we only know what we can glean from readily available maps, reports and local knowledge. The purpose of this exercise is to narrow down the list of potential roster areas and find a manageable subset of sites that are good candidates for on-the-ground evaluation.

HCCC is requesting the IRT members to weigh in with additional information and/or suggestions for sites as well as ideas about screening criteria.

GIS data layers that were analyzed to ID potential roster areas included:

- NWI and Ecology wetlands (mosaic of small wetlands were included)
- Fish distribution
- Protected lands
- Watershed characterization data (water flow and freshwater habitat)
- Parcel information

This information was supplemented with local knowledge of restoration/protection needs in the service area and with projects listed in technical documents (e.g., SMP restoration plans).

Scoring criteria for “zoning” potentially needs to be refined. HCCC identified subdivision potential as a possible indicator of development threat/risk, but this was a fairly subjective exercise that potentially could be refined.

EPA has produced NET Maps which may be an additional resource to consult for roster area identification and prioritization.

The IRT has some concerns with the wetland size scoring criteria; small wetlands may be able to generate significant functional lift or may be critical features in urbanizing areas; the current scoring criteria does not capture this.

ACTION: The IRT would like scoring assumptions to be listed for each criterion.

ACTION: divide potential roster area wetlands in those to be restored and those to be protected; apply separate scoring criteria to each.

Additional scoring criteria could include:

- Examine low slope areas with hydric soils overlaid with land cover data. The combined low slope-hydric soil layer covers an extensive portion of the watersheds. It might be possible to refine this and make this dataset more relevant by looking for areas where these features have been converted to other land cover types. This might identify areas that would have restoration potential if the land cover can be changed back to wetland status.
- Examine threats due to utility lines, roads, public infrastructure—some of this was qualitatively factored into the functional lift criterion.
- Examine PHS data and natural heritage data.
- Potentially apply higher scores to the Potential Functional Lift criteria, but HCCC is not overly confident they can really differentiate how much functional lift can actually be achieved without more site-specific analysis.

There was concern that the functional lift scoring criteria was favoring the diminishing returns of conducting restoration in areas experiencing increased development/degradation; however, the watershed characterization water flow and freshwater habitat model results (and scores) take this into consideration by identifying the highest ranking AUs for restoration and protection.

HCCC hopes to select sites from the top-scoring list and sites located on the second-cut list, located in the appendix of the Freshwater wetlands roster area memo, and perform site visits to assess onsite conditions. The ILF Instrument appendices will eventually be updated to include the sites where there is potential for functional lift. The list of sites is not the ultimate product, though. The process for identifying and screening potential sites is The Product. This process of identifying and prioritizing areas not only will serve the HCCC ILF program, but also local governments and others wishing to carry out restoration and protection activities around Hood Canal.

HCCC's scoring criteria considered the benefits of clustering mitigation sites in proximity to other mitigation or restoration/protection sites, but also balanced the need to have potential roster areas located throughout the service areas.

The IRT was concerned that this list may focus on "protection" mitigation projects, which are not the preferred type of mitigation according to the instrument. HCCC clarified that the list includes both restoration and protection sites (many sites will have both types of mitigation opportunities); there are many good protection sites in Hood Canal because there is still a lot of high functioning habitat and HCCC wants to make sure that these sites are protected now rather than having to restore them at a later point in time, after they have been degraded.

There was an IRT suggestion to potentially weight some of the scoring criteria.

There was an IRT suggestion to have the HCCC ILF program investigate the protection of forested wetlands, which are not currently protected by the forest practices act. A similar suggestion was made to examine areas that may be under threat of impact from future mining activities.

ACTION: IRT needs to provide input on the prioritization of areas on HCCC freshwater wetland roster area list and supplement the list with local knowledge. HCCC would like input by May 31.

Marine Roster Areas

HCCC reviewed SMP restoration plans and other technical documents to develop a list of potential mitigation nearshore sites. HCCC created an Excel spreadsheet listing projects and mitigation actions that may occur within each AMU, stratified by habitat type. The list of projects is primarily restoration-based, rather than protection. ESA has prepared a marine/nearshore roster area memo similar to the freshwater wetland roster area memos, but the marine/nearshore memo still needs refining prior to distribution to the IRT. The memo used watershed characterization data and PSNERP Strategies recommendations (a process based approach) to identify marine/nearshore shoreline segments that had high biological functions (based on watershed characterization data) and had restoration or protection management recommendations (based on PSNERP Strategies data).

Other local studies including Kitsap County's sediment analysis technical document can also be used to identify and prioritize marine/nearshore mitigation sites.

ACTION: ESA will meet with HCCC to refine the marine/nearshore memo so that it can be distributed to the IRT.

ACTION: HCCC will distribute the marine/nearshore memo for IRT review within the next week to 10 days and would like input from the IRT regarding the marine/nearshore list of mitigation sites by May 31.

After HCCC has received IRT input, they will select sites and stratify them by habitat types and location within the Hood Canal; prioritize them by the potential amount of functional lift they can generate; HCCC will then conduct field visits.

Culvert projects were not considered for the marine/nearshore roster area list. This is not the best use of HCCC mitigation funds.

The primary marine/nearshore project impacts are due to: riparian clearing, bulkheads, and overwater structures.

There are not many subtidal restoration opportunities in Hood Canal; DNR is currently removing lots of creosote pilings.

Site Visits

HCCC would like to conduct site visits of selected freshwater and marine/nearshore roster areas/sites sometime in July, August, or potentially September. There may be site access issues that delay these visits.

ACTION: HCCC will send a doodle poll to determine when most IRT members are available to attend roster area/site visits.

EHW2

HCCC is investigating mitigation options at 5-6 sites and is working with partner groups. EHW2 impacts are to eelgrass, intertidal non-vegetated, riparian, and wetland habitats.

Next Steps

The next IRT meeting is scheduled for June 25 in Port Orchard; HCCC will discuss the draft final list of roster areas (marine/nearshore and freshwater wetland).

After the list of roster areas has been selected, site visit can occur, and HCCC can begin to think about conceptual designs and cost agreements.

DNR has an EPA grant to assess optimal conditions needed to restore eelgrass; they have hired Ron Thom to conduct this work. DNR is the agency in charge of restoring 20% of the eelgrass in Puget Sound by 2020. Ron's work can be used as a resource for HCCC ILF program mitigation project identification and prioritization.

ACTION: HCCC will send out a doodle poll to schedule an IRT meeting for July, August, or September.