



Hood Canal Coordinating Council

Jefferson, Kitsap & Mason Counties; Port Gamble S'Klallam & Skokomish Tribes

Landscape Assessment and Prioritization (LAP) Tool Advisory Group Meeting #1 - Notes

Date: May 17, 2019; 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM

Location: HCCC office, 17791 Fjord Drive, NE, Suite 124, Poulsbo, WA

5 min **Welcome/introductions**

Participants:

1. Kell Rowen - Planning Manager Mason County
2. Dave Herrera - HCCC Board, Policy Advisor Skokomish Tribe
3. Jim Bolger- Assistant Director Kitsap County Department of Community Development
4. Patty Charnas - Director of Community Development Jefferson county (joined by phone)
5. Paul McCollum - HCCC Board, Natural Resources Director Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe (joined by phone)
6. Nate White – HCCC Watershed Project Coordinator
7. Scott Brewer – HCCC Executive Director
8. Heidi Huber – HCCC Programs Development Coordinator

LAP Tool overview/ultimate outcomes

Overview

Assess the landscape to determine where ecologically sensitive areas are at risk from development (existing/future) and climate change, then determine prioritized areas to look more closely at possible actions that might be used to address these risks

- Example actions: restoration, acquisition, land use changes, etc.
- Some ecologically sensitive areas might have no development conflicts already, some might be allowed to have development occur, some might be high value to beg consideration of alternative management approaches

Timeline

This is a grant funded project. Our deliverable is due in December of 2019. HCCC staff plan to present the results of the pilot at the HCCC board meeting in October. We are working with consultant PetersonGIS to develop the LAP Tool.

Outcomes

Goal is to have the LAP Tool tie into work we are currently doing for summer chum salmon recovery work and Integrated Watershed Plan development and implementation

Advisory Group purpose

- Develop the conceptual approach/designs of the LAP Tool to ensure usability amongst HCCC partners
- Develop prioritization criteria and an analytical approach for incorporating desired data inputs
- Identify pilot focus areas to prioritize for the LAP Tool's application
- Troubleshoot the LAP Tool's accuracy and advise on improvements, as necessary
- Develop recommendations identifying policy areas of focus and opportunities for habitat restoration, protection, and science based tools to assist land use decision-making (e.g., stream-typing; nearshore prioritization, etc.) to align with IWP goals and objectives for the next phase of this effort (beyond this grant)

Questions to inform LAP Tool development

Usefulness

1. How can the LAP Tool be useful to you so you use it?
2. How is this tool different than other existing tools that identify ecologically sensitive areas?
3. What kind of analysis/data are you currently using in your watershed planning decisions?
4. What watershed planning analysis/data do you want but do not have that would be useful to have in the LAP Tool?

Group Discussion:

- There is a lot of information out there including Kitsap's Shoreline Prioritization Tool and Refugia Study. The value of this tool is in visualization of the existing data. Would be nice to have a Shoreline Prioritization Tool for all of Hood Canal. Another focus is on permitting and processing permits for shoreline and upland development. There is a need for accurate stream mapping for resident fish populations and something that flags where potential restoration opportunities/mitigation opportunities exist. Others agreed it would be nice to have more accurate [water typing](#) for all of Hood Canal. Would also be great if the LAP Tool could help support a Fee in Lieu Program.
- A [Transfer of Development Rights Program](#) is being explored for the eastern part of Hood Canal. This tool could help prioritize areas that we want development rights to come off of. One data layer could show where the best available opportunities to transfer development rights are. What is the market for transferring development rights in Hood Canal? Can we create a bank? Note that this is a very sensitive subject in some HCCC member counties, due to the Navy's recent large scale purchase of development rights in Hood Canal.
- We have access to lots of habitat data (fish commission [SSHIAPP](#)), and prioritization tools (for riparian etc). Would be good to use this to develop standards across the Hood Canal region that would adequately protect nearshore, shoreline, and other critical habitats. How do we get to a land use planning process that focuses on habitat protection? We need to identify the high priority areas for conservation
- What is driving the rebound in salmon populations is the fact that the habitat in Hood Canal hasn't been modified or destroyed, restoration has helped.
- Keep in mind throughout this process that local governments can't change land use regulations easily.

Land management and the relative protection of land

1. How can the LAP Tool objectively communicate/symbolize the protection levels afforded by different land management regimes while avoiding value judgments?

2. How can changing the way land is managed serve to meet your watershed planning goals?

Group Discussion:

- Non-conforming lots are unfortunately pretty prevalent. The lots are much smaller than what would be allowed today. Would be very difficult to change this. Have to be extremely sensitive to issues surrounding private property rights.
- Critical areas and protective buffers are currently designated for protection: What is the hypothesis around the gaps that this project can fill?
- HCCC's hypothesis is that current protections are adequate but we want to determine how we can find opportunities for improving land management, and opportunities for restoration and mitigation. Want to look Hood Canal wide, no one else is doing this.
- As an example, large parcels still exist in southern Hood Canal, many of which are currently designated forest land but are not in long term commercial forest land. There are tracks of RR5 that could potentially be downzoned to 10 or 20. It was acknowledged that this approach would work better in some places than others, so it shouldn't be considered an approach that will be effective throughout all of Hood Canal.
- Fish populations are doing well because we have lots of functioning habitat, how do we protect that? The goal isn't to ask people to move, we need to be realistic about what we can achieve. We just want adequate protections around critical areas and identify the best places to steer development.
- Getting into land use may not be where this project should to go. Having equity among property owners (rather than how it is currently with some needing more buffers than their neighbor) will help calm the winds.
- Rules exist for timber industry. Need something for agricultural practices, other local land use.
- We have mandated requirements under Growth Management Act, Critical Areas Ordinance and there are standards, but compliance is tricky. Standards can be vastly different because some were appealed and others weren't.
- Would be helpful to have LAP Tool focus on particularly complex/difficult areas so people understand how complicated this is. Ex: old Dosewallips and Duckabush subdivisions located in the floodplain. If people re-located out of the floodplain where would they go? What are the opportunities to move to higher and drier ground?
- There was a suggestion to have the LAP Tool focus on the natural environment, marketing to landowners the cool ecological features in your neighborhood. It would heighten awareness and also show risk to those valued ecological features. Could be very valuable for local outreach. Funds for general outreach is pretty much non-existent, and existing programs like Shore Friendly are losing staff in some counties so hopefully the program will continue.
- Would be great to have more resources for landowners. The Port of Tacoma has an interactive site for their projects that the LAP Tool could emulate.
- How do we make change? Can't always play it safe to avoid conflict. But must acknowledge we cannot regulate people into changing, need to have options and tools including buying out, etc. Fast ferries are going to change things for the eastern part of Hood Canal, population will grow.
- Ideally we would have standards in place so when new people move in, they accept current regulations and standards.
- Shore Friendly is a very popular program. Shoreline homeowners can get advice on bulkheads and potentially grants up to \$5,000. Funded through ESRP/NEP.

Determine what ecologically sensitive criteria the LAP Tool should focus on

Group Discussion:

- Forage fish spawning areas
- Fish species distribution (i.e. where fish are present in what waters)
- Fish and wildlife database showing focus areas with sensitive/priority habitats

Where should the LAP Tool be piloted?

Group Discussion:

- Focus on biological hotspots. Possible areas include: Dosewallips, Duckabush, Big Beef/Seabeck, Dewatto
- Look at areas with the most potential for population density increase.
- There is a pilot outreach project in Manchester. Goal is to identify issues within the communities and work with the county to determine priorities to address.
- A Natural Resource Asset Management Tool is being developed that looks at natural resources as assets. Same program public works uses for sewer and public infrastructure.
- Efforts are being made to digitize permits to make it all online. Smartgov is an online government tool used by some HCCC counties to do this.
- There is a desire to flag properties with critical areas, and have a notice to title requirement but it wasn't happening consistently. It was noted that this would not be something that could defensibly move forward without substantial, collective legal review. There is also desire to put more info out to the public. Also going to share code compliance so new owners can see past code info when researching parcels.
- There is a need for more accurate Stream typing- Lots of errors in wetland maps and stream typing. Efforts have begun digitizing what is seen on the ground to get more accurate data.

Next steps/adjourn

- Meeting schedule
- Next Advisory Group meeting will be reviewing a mock-up of the LAP Tool based on the feedback received during this meeting
- The next meeting will likely occur in July, 2019