



Bush Prairie HCP Stakeholder Meeting

March 17th, 2023 | Port of Olympia

Attendees (29):

BUSH PRAIRIE HCP STAKEHOLDERS:	
Name	Organization
Wendy Steffensen	LOTT Cleanwater Alliance
Don Moody	CBRE
Peter Ramaley	Rep. Strickland (WA 10)
Amanda Ogden	FAA
Jessica Bryant Sean Williams	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Jessica Jackson Trevor Lessard	Puget Sound Energy
Jessie Simmons	Olympia Master Builders
Katrina Van Every	Thurston Regional Planning Council
Mel Murray	Tumwater School District
Shaun Dinublio	CRD Squaxin Island Tribe of Indians
John Kaufman	Kaufman Construction & Development
Glenn Wells	Architect
Sue Danver	Black Hills Audubon Society Volunteer
Lydia Dadd	
Phone attendee (no name given)	
BUSH PRAIRIE HCP APPLICANTS:	
Mike Matlock Brad Medrud Ann Cook Erika Smith-Erikson Austin Ramirez	City of Tumwater
Warren Henderson Joy Johnston	Port of Olympia

BUSH PRAIRIE HCP CONSULTANT TEAM:	
David Zippin Jared Haney Deb Bartley	ICF
Drue Nyenhuis Flora Tempel	Cascadia Consulting Group

Arrival and Welcome (Warren Henderson, Brad Medrud)

- Meeting began at 9:10 AM with introductions of presenters and instructions for asking questions in the hybrid meeting.
- Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the HCP Draft that is on the website.
- This meeting is intended to provide a full review of the project because we have not met since 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

HCP Draft Introduction (David Zippin)

- Current status of the Habitat Conservation Plan
 - We have completed the working draft.
 - We are now working to get the document ready for the application.
 - In this meeting, we are going to review the background and fundamentals of the HCP.
 - We will walk through the key elements of the working draft.
- Why did we begin the HCP process?
 - To protect unique south Puget Sound prairie species, several of which are endangered.
 - To plan for and mitigate the effects of encroachment from development and overgrowth on their habitat.
 - The Olympia pocket gopher was the impetus for beginning to consider an HCP.
 - It is the most widespread of the prairie species and its habitat is entirely inside the Olympia city limits.
 - Also, will protect the streaked horned lark, Oregon spotted frog, and Oregon vesper sparrow.
- Impact of ESA listing
 - Endangered Species Act requires that any action that meets the level of a “take” must apply for a permit.
 - It is a costly and challenging permit to pursue.
 - The City and Port took it upon themselves to get that permit for the entire city.
- Purpose of the HCP
 - To provide developers and regional airport with the ability to get permits.
 - This provides benefits over individual-project level HCPs:
 - Far more cost effective
 - Efficiency for the development community: instead of needing to prepare their own HCP, they can simply pay the City for permit coverage and utilize the city’s permit immediately.
 - It is a 30-year plan based on projected growth, which provides a lot of security for development.



- Operations and maintenance activities at the Port can also affect the species, and can be limited by the lack of a Federal permit.
- Overall, the HCP will streamline and facilitate development.
- Funding sources
 - We have received Federal grants from the Fish and Wildlife Service
 - These were matched by the City and Port.
 - The grants are managed by the local branch of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (WDFW).
- About the working draft
 - This is an informal public review process.
 - Comments will be accepted through May 21, 2023.
 - There will be a formal review later this year through the NEPA and SEPA process.
 - Comments can be given orally or via email.
 - In the NEPA and SEPA process, all comments must be responded to in writing.

HCP Draft Review (David Zippin)

- Chap 1 - Permit
 - The city and the port will hold the permit as co-permittees.
 - The requested term is 30 years.
 - It covers all 4 species.
 - 3 are already listed by the Federal ESA
 - All 4 are listed by the State ESA
 - The expectation is that the Oregon vesper sparrow will be added to the federal list within the next 30 years.
 - Including the vesper sparrow now provides security; we won't have to apply for another ESA for the sparrow when it is federally listed.
 - Geographic scope: two boundaries
 - "Permit area" is the smaller area, which is the city's urban development area. This captures where the city expects to grow in the future.
 - The "plan area" includes the permit area and covers the full potential range of the pocket gopher where conservation efforts will occur.
 - Recently, we made a change in the permit area to give more options for conservation of the streaked horn lark.
 - The horned lark only occurs on the airport, so added a section to the permit area adjacent to the airport for specific conservation for that species.
 - The area corresponds to the south Puget Sound lowland habitat that needs to be conserved as mitigation for the lark.
- Chap 2 - Environmental Setting
 - What's out there today that is relevant to the species?
 - To find out, we performed habitat distribution models for each of the species.
 - Olympia Pocket Gopher:
 - The model predicts where they occur or where they are likely to occur.
 - This was important because we know that the occurrence data is very incomplete for this species.
 - Absent accurate data, we must predict where they are likely to occur.
 - We used a binary flow chart that led to predictions for areas.
 - Model took into account the specific soil and tree cover needs of the gopher and the configuration of habitat.



- Within 200 meters of area that is known habitat, there are likely to be more areas of habitat because 200 meters is the dispersal area for the juvenile gophers.
 - 3 types of habitat defined: currently occupied habitat, high likelihood of occupancy, lower likelihood of occupancy.
 - Oregon Spotted Frog
 - Area defined as known habitat based on occurrences, plus habitat that is hydrologically connected.
 - Streaked Horned Lark
 - Occurs only at the airport.
 - Requires specific meadow areas.
 - Very sensitive to disturbance so there is a 100-meter buffer for building areas and treed areas (not individual trees).
 - Oregon Vesper Sparrow
 - Only known occurrences at the airport
 - Other potential habitats nearby.
- Chap 3 - Covered Activities
 - Only covers the types of projects that need take authority:
 - Covers urban development
 - Operations and maintenance activities
 - Aeronautical activities at airport
 - Partially or fully funded by aviation administration
 - Operations and maintenance of air infrastructure
 - Includes air show
 - EXCLUDES: Daily flights of private planes
 - Non aeronautical activities at the airport.
 - Other properties of the airport that are not used for flight
 - Conservation implementation needs, as some habitat is often damaged in process.
- Chap 4 - Effects Analysis
 - We have estimated urban growth that may occur in the next 30 years and the development potential for the airport.
 - We removed areas that will already have developed by the time the HCP is approved.
 - Then, we overlaid areas that are likely to develop with the species habitat model to understand the potential impact on the habitat.
 - Tables shown display the maximum allowable take limit for each species.
 - The plan could be amended to increase this limit if growth exceeds our expectations.
 - GOPHER: 21% expected total loss.
 - FROG: only 20 acres of expected loss (less than 1%) due to very strict limits on growth in the wetlands and critical areas ordinance.
 - LARK: 43% of suitable habitat acres expected to be lost
 - SPARROW: 22% habitat loss
- Chap 5 - Conservation Strategy
 - The conservation strategy seeks to minimize and mitigate the impacts of development.
 - We must minimize to the extent possible.
 - We cannot stop the take from occurring, but the impact must be mitigated.
 - Mitigation response is based on size of habitat lost and the size of the population.
 - Biological goals and objectives are important metrics to be monitored for each species (shown on slides)
 - 5 overall conservation actions defined.

- 1. Establish and manage a prairie and wetland reserve system
 - Offset the areas that will be lost with protections of new areas.
 - If full build out occurs as expected, a similar or more land will be acquired for conservation.
 - Areas for each species might overlap.
 - We will also manage the land to support each of the species better than before via restoration.
 - For comparison, functional acres were calculated by Thurston county's HCP for the same species, but they also counted habitat quality.
 - Bush Prairie is counting only occupancy because we will do restoration.
- 2. Restore prairie habitat
 - By the end, acres in the reserve system will be native or high quality native prairie environments to create more resilient local populations.
 - Will plant, mow, etc. to encourage expansion of native species on the property
- 3. Minimize adverse effects in wetlands for Oregon spotted frog
 - 2 to 1 restoration of effected lands in accordance with existing ordinances.
- 4. Fund translocation research
 - The pocket gopher travels a lot, but there will be places that are too far for them to move.
 - If colonization can't happen on its own, translocation of individuals to the new areas could happen to populate the reserve.
 - For first 10 years, City and Port will fund experimental translocation if needed.
- 5. Best practices implementation
- Chap 6 - Monitoring and Adaptive Management
 - We will track if the City and Port are doing what they said they would.
 - We will also conduct effectiveness monitoring and have an adaptive management program with defined success criteria.
 - The table shows percentages of types of habitat wanted for each species.
 - There are defined trigger rates for habitat to address uncertainties.
- Chap 7 - Implementation
 - The HCP defines the roles and responsibilities of each organization involved.
 - It also defines the application process for developers.
 - There are annual reporting requirements.
 - The land acquisition process is well defined.
- Chap 8 - Cost and Funding
 - Cost have been categorized:
 - Plan administration
 - Land acquisition
 - Land management
 - Monitoring
 - Olympia pocket gopher research
 - Endowment
 - We've made a cost estimate for each of these categories, which will be updated for inflation. The estimate in 2021 dollars is just under \$90 million.
 - With expected loss of 1,529 acres, the cost per acre is just under \$59k, which will be the Habitat Conversion Fee.
 - Land on property that is not on modeled habitat will not pay.
 - If a developer wants to dedicate land on their own site to conservation they can reduce or remove their fee.
 - Fee calculation varies by construction:



- No habitat affected = no fee
- Addition or accessory structure = fee based on actual size of habitat disturbed
- 1 acre or less = will be considered total loss
- Greater than 1 acre = minimum 1 acre, multiplied by actual habitat acres lost
- Fee is expected to pay for all HCP costs.

Next Steps (David Zippin)

- We have another meeting on April 21st.
- Comments on the working draft are due by May 21st.
- We are coordinating with WDFW on the upcoming NEPA and SEPA process this fall, which they will be leading.
- During that process we will release the official HCP and receive your comments.
- Comments in that process will be replied to in writing.

Questions and Answers (David Zippin)

Wendy Steffensen, LOTT Clean Water

- I don't understand the difference between the permit and plan area. What is allowed on each?
 - The permit area is where development activities are allowed.
 - The plan area is where the city and port will be purchasing land for conservation.
- One slide had effects analysis with effects analysis with acres, another had conservation strategy with acres. How do they relate?
 - Effects analysis is about the total maximum permitted impacts on modeled habitat that will be lost.
 - The reserve system is land that will be bought for conservation, those are the conservation strategy acres.
- As people are deciding to develop these lands and there is a habitat conversion fee to pay, what happens when we reach the limit?
 - All that means is the maximum development allowable by this permit.
 - The amount we are applying for is our expected growth for the area.
 - If there is more, we can either amend the HCP by applying to Fish and Wildlife to increase the limit, and we would have to provide additional mitigation, or the developer could pursue their own HCP to cover the additional growth.

Katrina Van Every, TRPC

- Will the City or Port manage the conservation acres or do you plan to transition the property to another conservation entity to manage?
 - It will be up to city to make sure that they are managed appropriately.
 - That might be done by hiring their own conservation staff or it could be through management agreements with other organizations.
 - The funding plan ensures that there will be enough money to make that happen.

Meeting Concluded: 10:30 AM

