



Bush Prairie HCP

Stakeholder Meeting, March 29, 2019

BUSH PRAIRIE HCP STAKEHOLDERS:	
Name	Organization
Leland Starks	Blackland Environmental
Patrick Dunn	Center for Natural Lands Management
Laurence Reeves	Capitol Land Trust
Wendy Steffensen	LOTT Cleanwater Alliance
Amy Tousley	Puget Sound Energy
Mara Healy	Thurston Conservation District
Chris Chaput	Thurston County
Teresa Hoyer	Thurston County Assessor's Office
Mel Murray Ken Ames	Tumwater School District
Theresa Nation Mary Huff Janet Gorrell	Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mark Bakeman	Washington State Department of Transportation
BUSH PRAIRIE HCP APPLICANTS:	
Mike Matlock Brad Medrud	City of Tumwater
Rachael Jamison Sam Gibboney	Port of Olympia
BUSH PRAIRIE HCP CONSULTANT TEAM:	
Troy Rahmig	ICF
Linda Krippner	Krippner Consulting
Ruth Bell Lynn Knapp	Cascadia Consulting Group

Arrival and Welcome

- Meeting began at 9:05 AM.
- Rachael Jamison stated the purpose for the meeting as an update of the HCP process and time for open discussion.
- Sam Gibboney welcomed the group and acknowledged how the HCP project fits in with the Port's statement of values, including being a leader in environmental stewardship. There will be a joint meeting with Tumwater City Council in June to give an update on the HCP process.

Presentation and Discussion: Phase 2 Project Activities

- Troy Rahmig - We've had some small group discussions to inform the HCP process.
 - Rachael Jamison - if you want a small group meeting let us know because we want to get critical feedback from central folks.
- Troy Rahmig - Developing a current understanding of the distribution of the covered species is a focus at this point in the process. This has included WA and US Fish and Wildlife input on the species and how the HCP functions over time. Part of that discussion is understanding how to offset effects on covered species. There is the ecological piece of the species and the practical nature of how the HCP works on the parcel level. We're having all these conversations at the same time.
 - All of these points will be in the effects analysis and conservations strategy chapters of the HCP.
- Linda Krippner - We have the most data for the pocket gopher because there have been quite a few surveys in the Tumwater area. We had land cover data and used 2018 aerial photos, and ICF's land cover mapping. It's very fine scaled because these gophers can live in small areas like parking strips. We have tree cover, grass, shrub, and developed area mapped. Gophers need to eat grass, so suitable growing soils could be a potential habitat. We gathered data from four different sources and refined those by using the landcover and soils data. It's very likely that there are more gophers in the area that are not included in the surveys, so we assumed they can disperse around 200 meters in a year. So anything within 200 meters of the known area and contiguous on the map could be habitat. There are also areas that have suitable soils but have not seen gophers in that area.
 - We welcome additional data if you have it available.
 - On the map, green are areas that have been surveyed and have known occupancy, blue is anything within 200 meters of the occupied areas and contiguous habitat, isolated spots in yellow are less likely to be occupied.
 - Teresa Hoyer - Have you been able to include private studies like those that have been turned into the assessor's office?
 - Linda Krippner - We've incorporated anything that has been turned into the City of Tumwater; only sources turned into regulatory agencies.
 - Teresa Hoyer - It's unfortunate that private studies that haven't been turned into a regulatory agency aren't included.
 - Troy Rahmig - We can put a call out for that data.
 - Ruth Bell - How granular is the map for habitat area?

- Linda Krippner - At over 30% landcover there are too many roots for them to burrow and not ideal habitat. The landcover analysis has not been done on the parcel level, but rather the pixel level.
- Linda Krippner - We will post the map on the website, so this group can reference it.
- Patrick Dunn - There is an issue with the use of that 200 meters in terms of migration and movement. The map should be showing undiscovered locations. I would equate the blue and the yellow as equal.
 - Linda Krippner - This map will change over time. This is a baseline.
 - Troy Rahmig - Right now we're trying to make an estimate for the plan, but we are basing it off the high and low probabilities of where we can find gophers.
 - Patrick Dunn - I think that probability makes those two colors equal.
 - Troy Rahmig - We're discussing with U.S. Fish right now about the significance of those colors.
- Teresa Hoyer - Can you clarify the map area?
 - Linda Krippner - The UGA equals the permit area. This area will be used for effects analysis. And the greater area is the conservation area. We don't yet have detailed map data for the larger conservation area.
- Patrick - Does the land need to be known occupied to be considered for restoration sites? If so, that really limits restoration.
 - Troy Rahmig - From the regulatory perspective, U.S. Fish wants to know the conservation is helping because it's occupied, but then have enough assumptions about where there could be occupations in the future.
 - Theresa Nation - Expanding analysis into the plan area would help to identify additional mitigation opportunities and make sure that is mitigation is effective across areas.
 - Troy Rahmig - We are looking at conservation opportunities for the sub species as well.
 - Theresa Nation - When determining plan area, were there predicated conservation needs for the future?
 - Troy Rahmig - Yes, it was driven primarily for the gopher, but when we look at the other three species we know there are limited opportunities within the plan area and there would be more opportunities if the plan area is expanded further, but there is a balance for how much land we need for a given species and expanding the plan even more. Because we haven't finished effects analysis for those species, we don't know yet what the full area will be. The birds are especially challenging.
- Mel Murray - Is there competition for restoration other HCPs in those parcels?
 - Troy Rahmig - There could be. It's an unfortunate reality of the subspecies range.
- Teresa Hoyer - The value is increased over time based on the conservation use within the plan area. We've had Kaufman's HCP on the Deschutes and PSE who just bought 45-50 acres with gophers on it and they are putting in their own HCP and we've already seen a big jump in what Kaufman paid versus what PSE paid. We think there will be a rush with less land that's usable for this purpose and increase in value for this particular use.

- Troy Rahmig - One thing we've seen in other places with constraints on conservation and in growing city areas is initial rush but its tempered in the market.
 - Chris Chaput - The county did something similar to what you have done and I want to make sure that you overlay your information for the UGA before you get too far with U.S. Fish.
- Linda Krippner- For the frog area, we started with Thurston County wetland inventory. Then we used state database for frog locations and extended out area locations to wetlands. We're still getting data from WDFW and U.S. Fish for frequently flooded areas for frogs, but we are including wetlands and perennial streams at least 100 meters long. In the permit area there is a limited distribution, it's really Fish Pond Creek and Salmon Creek that are the habitat areas. We're not expecting too many indirect impacts to frogs since the wetlands are already protected with critical land ordinance.
 - Teresa Hoyer - is there a value on wetland credits for the frog? So, if an owner finds this species on their land are there are credits available for purchase from a private owner?
 - Linda - Yes, that just hasn't happened yet.
 - Teresa Hoyer - We're trying to establish what is the value of a credit, and we appreciate any information about any of those credits selling.
 - Patrick Dunn - How does the person that they are selling the credits to know how much they need? Is there established criteria for how much damage is equal to how many credits?
 - Teresa Hoyer - How much damage does each credit value?
 - Theresa Nation - Since there is no system developed for the frog, it's just a concept at this point.
 - Patrick Dunn - It's a negotiated three-way process with the service.
 - Teresa Hoyer - Does the landowner know how many credits they can sell?
 - Theresa Nation - Yes, they know. But we probably won't know for quite a few years about how much damage equates to a credit.
 - Troy Rahmig - In the currency of credits and acres, there needs to be a common language between areas that are impacted and those that might be suitable for mitigation. That tends to be case-by-case negotiations over time. It's often an acreage-based discussion. You are trying to capture the functionality of the species. Often it seems like the values haven't changed that much because we want to signal something stable to the marketplace. It will take a while for the market to be figured out. In the conservation strategy, we'll talk about mitigation banks as one option or the city and port can buy conservation properties and manage them.
- Linda Krippner - For the lark and sparrow, our distribution map is simple because we just used WDFW data. The lark was restricted to the airport and the sparrow data is 30 years old. Both need low grassland for nesting and foraging. We mapped airport grounds and anything contiguous that was grass.
- Troy Rahmig - we are getting feedback in real time from U.S. Fish and we're happy to share. These maps will probably be different the next time you see them. These maps help us estimate impacts over time but how they will be used for implementation is an open question.



Stakeholder Input:

- Rachael Jamison - We are asking the following questions because a critical eye is great in making sure we have a good plan.
- **Conservation Land Management - What concerns, requests, or suggestions do you have, if any, related to how, and by whom, conservation lands will be managed under the HCP?**
 - Teresa Hoyer - How are those lands managed?
 - Troy Rahmig - It's one thing if there is land where you can see all of these animals, but most of the time it's trying to enhance land for species occupancy. We look at the restoration activities that need to occur for ideal habitat. It's a laundry list of options impacted by site conditions. Included in the HCP is not only what the actions are likely to be, but how much they cost, and the frequency of upkeep. This will be part of the annual reporting process. It's not just buying land and walking away, there needs to be an entity - mitigation bankers or land trust or another third part entity that has the skills to do land management. The city and the port could do that themselves, too.
 - Laurence Reeves - We have conservation easements on gopher mitigation sites. We don't manage the land, but we make sure the easements are upheld because we don't have capacity or expertise to manage those prairie lands. Prairies need a lot of work and we decided that's not where we want to go. In the discussion it's important to realize that easement holders share different sensibilities around what level of maintenance responsibility they want to take on. We tell the land owner it's their responsibility. In the terms of the easement, we don't have requirements for maintenance for gopher habitat, but rather preventative development. On one easement we sold credits to a private entity and it was fairly random.
 - Patrick Dunn - Taking a step back and looking at gophers and sub species, the HCP should take into account requirements of the other HCPs because if not it becomes more of a regulatory puzzle. We don't want to overlay 5-6 other requirements across permits and jurisdictions.
 - Mel Murray - What kind of activities count for prairie management?
 - Patrick Dunn - It depends site by site, but these are habitats that require active management. There is required ongoing disturbance, but once they are restored that management level declines. Prairie Appreciation Day is a great place to learn about this.
 - Rachael Jamison - We can help promote Prairie Appreciation Day.
 - Laurence Reeves - In our experience, the requirements are to keep woody vegetation off the property and usually it took a little more work to get them off initially, but now they go in and mow once a season. Our work is not about restoring it to a native prairie, but just keeping off woody plants.
 - Chris Chaput - I'm hoping that the port and Tumwater are hoping to do more landscape level conservation management rather than focusing on one species. Making the county and port's HCP work together.

- Troy Rahmig - We are going to try and pull these together as much as we can. There are limitations to continuing to expand parcels, but you'll see a lot of the basic conservation biology principles in the plan.
 - Linda Krippner - I anticipate that over time we'll want more value for the conservation lands that we have. U.S. Fish has been asking for more, like how high a value do we want to make our conservation lands within the plan?
 - Patrick Dunn - There is not a lot of extra land to use, so it's best to get the most conservation opportunity out of those lands.
- ***Land Owner Responsibilities - What questions or concerns do you have, if any, related to land owner responsibilities under the HCP?***
 - Chris Chaput - One of the conversations we've had with U.S. Fish is what levels of conservation you're going to have.
 - Troy Rahmig - We are addressing priority areas that U.S. Fish is thinking about, such as areas that are critical habitat - and whether there is a higher priority to do conservations strategy in those areas. We put those circles on the map and talk about them but so far, we haven't heard that restoration is confined to those areas, but we haven't discussed the priorities.
- ***Project Coverage - Are you concerned about the types or projects that will be covered under the HCP, and if so what are your concerns?***
 - Mel Murray - Is there anything that just won't be allowed?
 - Troy Rahmig - No, but you'll have to be willing to bear conservation costs and logistics. It's a relative question.
 - Mel Murray - What about the school district and upkeep of playfields? Or purchase of new playfields?
 - Troy Rahmig - That's an example of ongoing activities that are in a gray area. The ongoing maintenance section of the HCP doesn't say you can't specifically do an activity but it's hard to quantify those activities on the species. We want to ensure we're doing enough conservation that those activities can occur and not have as much impact. As we get into the implementation discussion, we can't think of everything that might happen over 30 years, but there is language in the plan that outlines any activities that are similar to the covered activities. Running these test case scenarios helps us think about all of the activities that could happen and those effects.
- ***Best Available Information - What are your suggestions, if any, about data or information we should use for HCP development?***
 - Teresa Hoyer - In terms of data, I would think the environmental companies that handle that would be your best source.
 - Teresa Hoyer - It seems that U.S. Fish is the keeper of the data regarding credits. I would be concerned that information is not available to anyone who wants it. When doing a public record request, you could run into a lot of time wasted. This development affects everyone in terms of land management and ownership transfer. It seems like if you're selling credits via U.S. Fish and they decide what that credit is worth, that should be available publicly because it's transparent and allows people to



understand how much they'll need to spend to do what they need to do. Right now, that information is not readily available.

- Laurence Reeves - in our instance U.S. Fish's role is to ensure the proper number of credits are being purchased for the damage being done. They didn't want to know the financial part of it so they had no knowledge of how much money changed hands. I think it will be hard to get that information unless there is a mitigation bank set up.
 - Teresa Hoyer - Maybe there needs to be state legislation that records the credit transfer. It could run with the titles of the land.
 - Troy Rahmig - From U.S. Fish's perspective, they are valuing credits on habitat value and their job is just to make sure there is a balance to the damage. In other states there are websites that list mitigation banks and service areas. The database usually lists bank, service area, and contact information, but if you wanted to know dollar value, you need to call the contact.
 - Linda Krippner - There was a Canadian that bought a piece of property that was a wetland mitigation site and that designation was lost on the title and there were no records. It was completely non-developable. We need to have records somewhere.
 - Rachael Jamison - This problem can't be unique to us, so how have other states dealt with this?
 - Troy Rahmig - A recorded easement would go with titles. In regard to the dollar exchange issue, I don't know since that's a private exchange of funds.
 - Rachael Jamison - There will be lawyers brought in to the process later, so we can discuss disclosure of financial information.
- Teresa Hoyer - Was there something on the title that says how many conservation credits they bought?
 - Rachael Jamison - This will be figured out a little later in the process and is in the next phase of our discussions.
 - Troy Rahmig - All other HCP's I've done the reporting requirements are not on a parcel development - it's a summary of the acres restored.
- Patrick Dunn - The need for an additional level of a conservation easement might not be needed if the landowner is like a conservation nonprofit. It's been our perspective that the easement is a redundant and unneeded cost. We have a deed restriction.
 - Laurence Reeves - For a deed restriction, there is something that needs to be enforced.
- Mary Huff - If you need to gather additional information on what's working and what not on the conservation level from JBLM, I could provide that information because I used to work there.
- Mark Bakeman - A contact at the Port of Portland, Dana Greene, could be very helpful and works with Streaked Horned Lark.
 - Rachael Jamison - Thank you, we are having meetings with them already.
- ***Incorporating Notable Expertise - What are your concerns or suggestions, if any, related to the expertise we're bringing into this process (land management, species)?***
 - Wendy Steffensen - Have we reached out to the tribal entities?

- Rachael Jamison - Yes, we had a meeting with them recently and they are a critical and central partner.

Next Steps:

- Ruth Bell - If you need any materials or information to take back to your constituents - let us know and we can provide those.
- Troy Rahmig - We will have one or two more stakeholder meetings and then have a community workshop, but the timing has not been determined yet. The idea of the community workshop is to have a larger gathering right before the NEPA/SEPA process and let them know public scoping is about to occur.
 - Rachael Jamison - For the community workshop, we want to give absolutely everyone a chance to come into the process. We want transparency and hope that you are going back to your group to share this opportunity.
- Troy Rahmig - Smaller group meetings have been effective, so the door is open for that. If you are interested in that please reach out to Brad Medrud.
- Troy Rahmig - In the plan, we have draft idea of the effects over time but are still working on that as it is important for the conservation strategy. This is all a very integrated process. We keep in mind what is needed for the species but also what is practical over time.
- Mary Huff - Is there going to be decision points at the community meetings?
 - Troy Rahmig - We're assuming most people don't have a lot of background, so we'll show high level draft ideas. The info presented will probably be an even higher level than what we are talking about in these stakeholder meetings.
 - Rachael Jamison - This community is pretty well educated so we want to give a summary of the process up to now. I'd rather share more with the community than less. No surprise moments are the goal for the community meetings.
- Meeting concluded at 11:00 AM.