



Regional Open Space Conservation Plan Advisory Committee

Action Items and Summary Notes

Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Participants

Hilary Aten, PCC Farmland Trust
Jim Bolger, Kitsap County
Karla Boughton, Poulsbo
Ryan Dicks, Pierce County
Cindy Dittbrenner, Snohomish
Conservation District
Allan Ekberg, Tukwila
Erika Harris, PSRC

Sono Hashisaki, Tulalip Tribes
Michael Hubner, PSRC
Colin Hume, Department of Ecology
Paul Inghram, PSRC
Ikuno Masterson, Snohomish
County
Mark Mauren, Ueland Tree Farm
Michael Murphy, King County
John Owen, Makers

Nancy Rottle, UW
Maria Sandercock, PSRC
Renee Scherdnik, Kitsap County
Elaine Somers, EPA
Stephen Stanley, Dept. of Ecology
Tracy Stanton, Bullitt Foundation
Rich Still, Tukwila
Andrew Strobel, Puyallup Tribes
Terry Williams, Tulalip Tribes

Action Items

- PSRC sent meeting materials out to the committee. The advisory committee was asked to send additional feedback to Erika by May 26.
- Committee members and others interested in the Open Space Assessment Tool can attend a webinar on May 31 from 9:00 to 11:00 am.

Summary Notes

- 1) **Introductions.** Terry Williams (Tulalip Tribes, co-chair) called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. The participants listed above introduced themselves. The following people addressed the committee during the public comment period: Alex Tsimmerman, Queen Pearl, and A.J. Honore.
- 2) **Welcome.** Paul Inghram (PSRC) welcomed the group and talked about the project's goal of supporting city and county open space conservation objectives.
- 3) **Work Plan and Schedule.** Erika Harris (PSRC) briefly reviewed the work plan and schedule for the project. She encouraged committee members to provide input on the meeting materials both during and after the meeting.
- 4) **Emerald Alliance and Open Space Assessment Tool (OSAT).** Tracy Stanton (Bullitt Foundation) presented information on the Emerald Alliance, a collaborative, multi-sector group forming to promote open space conservation, restoration, access, and other shared interests around open space. The alliance is being founded on the belief that the region is stronger when it works together. She also reminded the group about the Open Space Assessment Tool (OSAT). The committee was invited to participate in a webinar on March 31 to learn more about the tool (details above). The group had the following questions and comments:
 - Tools like these need to be integrated as there are many of them.
 - Fred Gifford at the Trust for Public Land should be involved in the discussions of interoperability.

- A recent conference discussed developing a land use and management approach that is more in harmony with natural systems, taking into account the changes in hydrology, sea level, etc. that are occurring.
- 5) **County Presentations.** Exemplary projects and programs from each of the four counties in the region were presented, as summarized below. The presentations are on the Advisory Committee webpage at: <https://www.psrc.org/ros-meetings>.
- Renee Scherdnick from Kitsap County Public Works presented information on two multi-benefit green infrastructure projects in Kitsap County. The Clear Creek project in Silverdale reconnected Clear Creek to its floodplain, enhanced habitat, treated stormwater, reduced flooding, removed invasive weeds, replaced culverts, and improved trails and interpretation (<http://kitsap.paladinpanoramic.com/project/2231/44029>). The Manchester Stormwater Park provides water quality treatment for 100 acres of the surrounding community and created a new public space (<http://kitsap.paladinpanoramic.com/project/2231/44030>).
 - Cindy Dittbrenner from Snohomish Conservation District presented information on the agricultural resilience plan that she is working on for Snohomish County. It is part of the Sustainable Lands Strategy, a collaboration of many stakeholders working on fish, farm, flood, and other issues in Snohomish County (<http://snohomishcd.org/ag-resilience/>). The agricultural resilience plan will use hydrologic and hydraulic data to identify future conditions. Some are looking at relocating farms to keep them safe from inundation. They are looking at creating a learning network to share ideas with other conservation districts.
 - Michael Murphy presented King County's Land Conservation work program, an initiative to identify and protect remaining high conservation value lands in King County (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/land-conservation.aspx>).
 - Ryan Dicks presented Pierce County's Floodplains for the Future project (Puyallup, White and Carbon Rivers) is a cross-sector and inter-organizational partnership to recover floodplain functions and to protect the health and safety of communities around them (<https://www.co.pierce.wa.us/4684/Floodplains-for-the-Future>).
- 6) **Preliminary Open Space Identification.** Maria Sandercock (PSRC) presented information on the mapping of open space in the region. She also shared information on similar mapping done by peer regions. The presentation is on the advisory committee webpage. She asked the committee for feedback on assumptions, criteria, and data used. The group had the following questions and comments (These include comments received by email after the meeting):

A. General comments on open space mapping

- Additional information on tribal trust resources is needed.
- FEMA provides financial incentives for identifying and protecting critical areas.
- Different audiences will be interested in different scales. Developing an online map viewer may help with this.
- A holistic approach to this changing landscape needs to be taken. This will reduce costs and risk.
- It is important to focus on the long term to ensure a healthy, connected ecosystem and healthy, robust open space system for recreation.
- Consider how this interfaces with transportation planning and where gray can be converted to green.
- The scale of this plan should be similar to Transportation 2040 and VISION 2040 so that it can connect with PSRC's other planning, including for regional centers. The system should be looked at in a connected way.
- For lands identified, a relative index could be used that categorizes and stacks benefits. This would allow for dynamic querying for users with different priorities and funding streams.

- Tribal trust resources should be added to the list of criteria.
- If it is difficult to agree on how open space, particularly fish-farm-flood areas should be managed, that decision can happen later. It is still necessary to protect that land now so that management options are available in the future (“protect then perfect”).
- The East Coast is experiencing 1,000 year floods.
- Include a glossary in the plan. Make sure it works across counties, look at RCW for open space.
- Incorporate Climate Impacts Group information.
- One of the biggest barriers is the silos of regulations and laws from each agency. A strategy would be to harmonize regulations to reduce the cost of permitting and incentivize protection and restoration.
- NLCD 30m pixels are too coarse to capture many open space corridors- use WDFW’s High Resolution land cover dataset instead.
- Look at the Department of Commerce’s “Mapping Puget Sound Project” with regard to zoning layers.
- Results from the Puget Sound Watershed Characterization can be used to prioritize open space.

B. Comments on natural lands criteria

- Look at different types of habitat categories, from habitat in urban areas to late successional forests.
- Critical aquifer recharge areas (CARAs)/geologic hazards are not protected, but use is restricted to protect health and safety. CARAs are more focused on water quality than water quantity. USGS hydrologic information will be helpful in identifying water supply resources. Puget Sound Watershed Characterization data incorporates USGS soil recharge data and is another helpful data source.
- There were mixed comments on whether CARAs and geologic hazard areas should be included in open space network. Hazards affecting watershed processes are important to map (surface erosion, mass wasting, etc.)

C. Comments on farmlands criteria

- Resilience efforts are identifying land for future farming. A limiting factor is the distance to market.
- For agriculture, prime soils could be used as a limiting factor. The current land use should also be looked at to see if it has already been converted.
- Climate trends show a continued loss of farmland in California due to drought conditions. Future farming areas should be considered, including uplands, to increase food security.
- Small upland parcels are important because they support the agricultural community economy. For this reason and others, an inclusive look at agricultural lands should be taken.
- Aquaculture should be considered.
- Parcel size can be a problematic criteria as agricultural uses often happen on small parcels.
- Some committee members felt that the farmland that remains in the urban area should be protected. There was one recommendation to include it only if already protected/recognized as farmland.
- Ecology has an agricultural land layer with information from American Farmland Trust that they can share.
- Several comments recommending to be inclusive on farmland identification.
- Less productive farmland could be converted to other types of open space.
- PS Watershed Characterization data could be used to identify farmlands in areas important for water flow processes.
- Areas with a high-water table and poorly drained soils may be candidates for salmon habitat restoration.

D. Comments on working forests criteria

- Use parcels that are identified as “Designated Forest Lands”
- Include all working forest land
- Use PS Watershed Characterization data to identify working forests located in areas important for watershed processes.

E. Comments on aquatic systems criteria

- Look into what peer regions did for mapping priority riparian areas.
- There may be important open space to reclaim, such as on the Duwamish, which may currently not show up as open space.
- Consider where sea level rise will occur, how other hydrology will be impacted. Detailed Sustainable Lands Strategy assessments show that I-5 needs to be elevated because it will be under water in the future.
- Critical areas buffers could be used to identify locations of corridors and then use an onsite evaluation to determine desired width of easement/purchase.
- WDFW uses site potential tree height for determining riparian widths; width measured from the wider of ordinary high water mark or channel migration zone.
- Include 100-year flood zone, unstable slopes associated with area, wetlands associated with area. Ecology has mapped the 500-year floodplain in the Puget Sound area that could be used to identify areas providing hyporheic and habitat functions.
- Variable buffer widths may be good as they allow for consideration of existing conditions and management goals. Ecology has developed a riparian buffer map of recommended minimum buffer widths based on salmonid distribution and could be a good starting point.

F. Comments on urban open space

- Keep in mind that parks are a development incentive, and can spur development. That means that equity and the potential for displacement should be taken into consideration.
- Urban open space can make cities and centers more livable which in turn helps preserve rural open space.
- If there was an emergency fund for cities to take advantage of open space acquisition opportunities as they occur, that could be a programmatic way for the region to support urban open space.
- Different types of open space should be identified. Look at connectivity for different species.
- Operations and maintenance funding can be a problem for cities and counties.
- Alternate concepts, like garden city and landscape ecology concepts, could be helpful.
- Also consider wetlands, transmission line corridors, DOT right of way.
- Consider beaches on lakes and Puget Sound.
- Include critical areas, fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, priority habitats such as oak woodlands and prairies.
- Connectivity is an important regional role, along with prioritization.

7) **Draft outline, conservation strategies, and performance measures.** Erika asked the group to look at the draft outline provided and to send her feedback on it, as well as photos, information sources, and conservation success stories to include in the plan. Some conservation strategies and performance measures were included in the draft outline, and input on those items was also encouraged. The group had the following comments:

- Additional sources of data to include:
 - Landscape Planning for Washington’s Wildlife: Managing Biodiversity in Developing Areas
 - Land Use Planning for Salmon, Steelhead and Trout

- Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project: Strategies for Guiding Restoration and Protection Actions
- Mountains to Sound Greenway
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- California Coastal Trail
- Other protection and enhancement methods to consider include:
 - Leverage compensatory mitigation/preservation as part of unavoidable impacts to critical areas.
 - Ensure public access.
- Funding sources should be listed; include details on requirements.
- Other barriers to conservation to consider:
 - Lack of landowner and general public awareness of the problem and the solutions.
 - Landowner willingness.
- Other innovative strategies include:
 - Regional “open space banks” and/or Fee In Lieu programs
- Comments on goals and measures:
 - Include info on the number (and/or their acreage) of jurisdictions who have committed to implement ROSS.
 - Track number of acres conserved and restored.
 - Region-wide monitoring/assessment of how well open space conservation efforts are working.
 - Conservation of regionally important open space corridors/patches.
 - No net loss of canopy coverage in designated open space.
 - Include a riparian buffer goal.

8) **Wrap up and adjourn.** Erika summarized next steps and adjourned the meeting. The next meeting time will be determined later.

Questions: Contact Erika Harris at (206) 464-6360 or eharris@psrc.org or Maria Sandercock at (206) 971-3298 or msandercock@psrc.org.