



**December 09, 2009 Meeting Notes**  
**Dungeness River Management Team**  
**Dungeness River Audubon Center**  
**Railroad Bridge Park, Sequim, WA**  
**2:00 – 5:00 P.M.**

*Notes prepared by: Melissa Coughlin*

**Members/Alternates in Attendance:**

Steve Tharinger, Clallam County  
Cynthia Nelson, WA Department of Ecology  
Scott Chitwood, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (alt)  
Shawn Hines, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe  
Virginia Clark, Dungeness/Quilcene Planning  
Les Jones, Dungeness/Quilcene Planning (alt)  
Pete Schroeder, Riverside Property Owners (RM 3.25-4.25)

Michele d'Hemecourt, NOLT  
Michael Blanton, WDFW  
Don Hatler, Sports Fisheries  
Joe Holtrop, Clallam Conservation District  
Frank Needham, City of Sequim  
Judy Larson, Protect the Peninsula's Future  
Tyler Ahlgren, Protect the Peninsula's Future

**Others in Attendance:**

Randy Johnson, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe  
Kyle Guzlas, WDFW  
Steve Rankin, Streamkeepers  
Matt Heins, Dungeness Farms

Hannah Merrill, Clallam County & EMMT  
Bob Boekelheide, Dungeness River Audubon Center  
Welden Clark, Dungeness River Audubon Ctr.  
Ken Hobson, interested individual  
Melanie Roed, interested individual  
Melissa Coughlin, Independent Contractor/note-taker

**2:00 P.M.**

**I. Introductions /Review Agenda / Review and Approval of November 12<sup>th</sup> DRMT Draft Meeting Notes**

- Steve Tharinger called the meeting to order.
- Introductions all around.
- Agenda was reviewed and no additions or changes were requested.
- Frank Needham made a motion to accept the minutes from the November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, Judy Larson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- There were no additions or corrections on the November 12<sup>th</sup> draft meeting notes.

**Public Comment:**

- No comments were made at this time.

**II. Proposed River's End Restoration Plan for WDFW Property (follow-up) – Kyle Guzlas, Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife**

- Kyle Guzlas from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, specifically land management in Region 6 (includes the Peninsula and coast) began his presentation with a map of the North Olympic Wildlife Area, Lower Dungeness Unit showing the area owned by WDFW with the acreage of trees and shrubs planting area and area marked "weed control/Ag practice/Salt Marsh Enhancement".
- To give a little background, Kyle explained the history of the area to be discussed today. The shared vision of the partners has been and still is restoration for the estuary at River's End at the mouth of the Dungeness River. There have been some disagreements on how to get to that shared vision. Currently there is no real plan for the estuary – just dealing with current issues and partners.
- Kyle displayed the recently negotiated MOU between the WDFW, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Clallam County (available upon request).
- In the interim before estuary restoration can start the WDFW has met with Nash Huber (local farmer that leases farmland in our area) in July. Nash showed interest in leasing the property which sounded like a good deal for WDFW and Nash. Weed control for part of that area is a concern. There are issues with weeds, canary grass, and Canada thistle in the thirty acres. In lieu of money the farming practices would take care of the weeds. The agricultural lease is being reviewed in internal processes at the WDFW, but nothing has been signed or started due to the concerns of the county and Tribe that an agricultural lease is not in line with the long-term vision. Kyle has begun the internal process of developing a lease. Currently that lease has not been signed or started.

- Meetings with partners were begun to discuss the River's End property. Concerns over agricultural practices on the area included issues of sedimentation and nitrogen loading to bay. The agreement on a shared vision in a previous MOU for the area (Kyle thought this MOU was signed in 2004) had expired. On August 27<sup>th</sup> an office meeting was held on River's End with representatives from WDFW, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and Clallam County to negotiate and settle what the MOU should be specific to River's End and is now in the process of signing. It will be in effect for the next five years. Another meeting was held on Montesano on October 9<sup>th</sup> with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Clallam County and WDFW. Letters were sent back and forth between WDFW and Tribe. There was a CAG meeting in Gardiner on October 26<sup>th</sup> and another meeting on October 27<sup>th</sup> with the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and WDFW. The concerns include what impacts agricultural practices may have for that area, such as sedimentation being brought to the bay and nitrogen loading to bay.
- WDFW would like to plant trees and shrubs on a ten-acre piece that is now pasture, using funds from the Tribe. On 25-acres WDFW would like to control thistle with agricultural practices. The area will be planted with pasture grasses that would be mowed once or twice a year. Pasture grass was discussed and preferred over barley and other crops that could cause problems in flooding situations (soil disturbance and vulnerability). According to Kyle, this plan supports future efforts for estuary restoration and enhancements.
- Currently the area is in the next round of WWRP regional review (in about two weeks). Kyle said that in addition there have been applications made for more funding for the site to expand tree and shrub or salt marsh enhancements.
- Instead of working towards leasing the land the WDFW is currently working closely with Tribe to move forward with the long-term estuary restoration. Expecting an answer early next year.
- Part of the plan includes removal of all internal fences. Robert Brown represented the Dungeness Beach Association in a meeting with Kyle regarding fence removal to ensure no interference with DBA property.
- Judy Larson asked about concerns with barley crops and sedimentation. Kyle said that if cereal grain was planted to attract waterfowl (25% of crop would be left for waterfowl) the concern is that swan and other waterfowl would interfere with farming in the area. Fall harvest of grain can result in bare soil conditions that add to flooding concerns for the Dungeness. Bob Boekelheide asked if there are other species that they're managing for in that habitat, there are a lot more there than waterfowl. Kyle thought expanding the salt marsh is the long-range direction. There was never a plan to turn the area into a barley field. There is evidence of past farming activities in the area. Matt Heins said ideally ten acres could be used for agricultural lease and 25 acres reforested (which he said was part of the old plan) and allow the river to go back to the 1855 channel with SFBD funds. Kyle said ten of the acres were good pasture areas now, if the others were similarly planted that would be a low cost, low-maintenance solution while waiting to implement programs for the long term vision (that would not start for at least 3 years). Matt commented that the Tribe has been successful with property further up on Towne Road where there use to be a huge thistle patch - it is now planted and mowed. He said that in an original talk the SRFB process of the last ten years for River's End included opening up the delta. The further we move away from the original vision the longer the reforestation is put off. Kyle said the restoration of the estuary has been the vision all along, but there is no immediate plan to get there currently.
- Steve Tharinger asked the status of the MOU, and if there are specific plans articulated there. Kyle said that for this specific site it is in the works with the Wildlife Area Management Plan. Eleven units are owned by DFW. They are the last lands in the state that haven't been incorporated into a plan. There has been no management, nor any funding for a land manager. They will be finalizing the plan with specific strategies and objectives for all eleven units. Steve said the Team would be interested in seeing that and asked Kyle if the plans are available to the public. Kyle said the plan is in final draft, on-hold with the planning process, two citizen advisory groups meet each year. May hold one such advisory group meeting here in March. There is good representation at the meetings. Steve asked about the adoption of the plan. Kyle said new objectives and strategies need to be added to the plan. Steve suggested dissemination of the plan to the DRMT. Kyle said it was reviewed and commented on by the County and Tribe at the last partner meeting; those comments have been incorporated into the new draft plan. Steve asked if Nash Huber had planned on growing a compatible crop if he signed an ag lease. Kyle said they're working with the Tribe to take off the agricultural lease option. Hannah stated a concern expressed by Cathy Lear's— when purchasing these parcels ag practices were taken off, if they bring ag practices back when they were explicitly removed it will conflict with doing the restoration work. Kyle noted these concerns: length of a lease, is it renewable, and what specifically would be the ag practices. Steve proposed a limited scope, limited time lease. Matt Heins said that, during the first citizen advisory group, hay was proposed an agricultural practice for thistle control, but questioned why farming at all?

- Steve recapitulated what Kyle had said about the agricultural lease as an interim solution before work can start on the future long-term vision work. The river reverting to the 1855 channel is not impending. Matt said the County and state own the dike. Pete said there has been more than one original vision for River's End. The land had been donated with the understanding that it would be used for farming. The first negotiation was with the intent to protect farm land. Scott Chitwood understood (from a Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe viewpoint) that the property was acquired for estuary restoration and gathered that the re-establishment of the ag-link was more of a financial decision than a means to the long-term goal. When the Tribe inquired about the agricultural lease it was made clear that there is not much funding for managing the properties that WDFW owns. No reforestation has been planned, budgeted or incorporated into any workplan. The Tribe is not opposed to farmland protection but didn't think that was the best area for it. Steve asked about a short-term lease crop. Scott said the Tribe can provide funds for the short-term needs for the plans that would have been adopted if the WDFW had funding. Michael Blanton speculated about ten years in the future with regard to planting a forest there – with scenario A (grasses in place to control weeds for 3 years) vs. planting shrubs and trees with land management – and how the trees would look ten years from now. From his understanding the grass treatment would allow the trees a head start and would grow better for reforestation in the long-term. Kyle said this allows an opportunity to run tests on what is compatible in the area. Tyler Ahlgren added (as a commercial scale organic farmer) that if the goal is to avoid sedimentation, siltation and disturbing the soil, it would be difficult for any farmer to plant (any commercial viable crop) in order to control weeds and not disturb the soil and make it vulnerable. The best crop may be a cereal grain that you plant once and harvest periodically. For weed control only you would perform timed mowing. This way seed heads could be cut down while avoiding siltation and runoff.
- Steve told Kyle that the DRMT is interested in the overall management plan (especially specific to River's End area) and would like to be made aware of the March meeting details.

### III. WA Department of Ecology Updates – Cynthia Nelson, WA DOE

- Quil/Snow rule is formally complete and was signed by the new director of WDOE, Ted Sturdevant, on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.
- Preview version of the Dungeness rule was ready last week and posted on the website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>. Review it over the holidays and send in comments to Sarah Ferguson or Cynthia Nelson.
- Next step: DOE will take some time to digest all comments and revamp the rule, and then it will be turned over to internal teams (economic analysis and small business divisions). Then the formal process begins.
- Don Hatler asked about the next phase for the County, including the mitigation, fees, and inspection processes. Cynthia said that details of those aspects will be decided at the same time the rule goes through formal process. It will be functioning at the time rule is in effect. Don then asked if the public will have a chance to comment on the specific details. Cynthia said they will be addressed at the public meetings.
- Scott Chitwood brought up the WRIA 17 portion in Clallam County, which includes all the tributaries in Sequim Bay and Discovery Bay, that doesn't have a rule associated to it yet, and asked about that rule schedule. Cynthia said that has not been talked about yet. Development will begin after the Dungeness rule is finalized. Sarah Ferguson is the DOE staff person on that. Frank Needham said that Laura Blackmore (facilitator for WRIA 17) said there would be a planning session on it in April, but Cynthia hadn't heard about that.
- Shawn Hines followed up on the idea of a DRMT workshop to go over the rule which was suggested at the last DRMT meeting. Cynthia said if there was interest she would engage in a conversation on what is in the rule in January. A discussion ensued on the timing of such a meeting, if it should be part of the regular DRMT January meeting or a separate meeting. Issues discussed: Sarah Ferguson's availability; include walk through of what's in the rule and how pieces fit together; recommendations from the watershed plan; whether there will be a combined comment letter from the DRMT or separate letters with comments from individuals. Steve said the rule was akin to a constitution, while the MOU (due out in February) was like the code to implement the constitution and includes mitigation details. Don Hatler said the public reactions will occur at the time the details are made public.
- Judy Larson asked about the last-minute changes made after the rule was finalized for Quil/Snow. Shawn clarified that changes were made after the comment period but before rule was finalized. Cynthia said the changes were in response to the Attorney General's opinion. The main change there was to eliminate language about the peninsula where there wasn't much water, details of this are on-line: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov>
- Pete Schroeder asked about a specific situation: Fifty-six acres which use to be a farm with one well, was divided into five-acre parcels and sold around 1994. Four to five wells have been dug since – what are the

water rights and metering requirements for that situation? The original well was not intended for ten separate residents – when did people acquire water rights, and does it matter if you have an old or new water right and what about transferring rights to children. Steve clarified that what Pete described was an exempt well. When water is put to beneficial use the right is established. The situation described won't be impacted by rule. Those who haven't drilled a well before the priority date will be impacted. Cynthia explained that depending on the priority date a senior water right is established. If you have an exempt well you have the option to apply for a paper water right. Pete asked about required metering after the rule is in effect. Cynthia replied there will be a well log database on the DOE website <http://www.ecy.wa.gov> under "programs" search "well logs". Education and outreach programs will answer these questions, and the irrigation companies will also have the information. Les Jones asked who keeps the records, who pays their salaries, if you have questions should you go to Olympia or the County? Cynthia answered that the administration will be built into the process, for questions you would go to the entity that serves you water: you will pay for the mitigation plan at the planning office, probably at the permit counter, but all the specifics haven't been decided.

#### IV. The Status of Selected Species of Birds in the Dungeness Watershed and Estuaries– Bob Boekelheide, Dungeness River Audubon Center

- Before Bob Boekelheide began his presentation he displayed pictures of the Dungeness River taken November 16 and November 17, 2009 to show the difference one high water event can make on the river!
- Bob displayed patterns found in the data collected in the Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count and Wednesday morning bird walks in Railroad Bridge Park, where there is a wide range of places to observe birds.
- Sequim-Dungeness Christmas Bird Count History:
  - SDCBC began in 1975, when an unknown number of observers recorded 103 species.
  - The first SDCBC recorded with National Audubon occurred in 1976, 22 field observers recorded 99 species.
  - Counts occurred every year between 1975 and 2008, except 1990 (cancelled because of an ice storm)
  - Field participant numbers ranged from 14 in 1989 to 123 in 2004.
  - The highest species count occurred in 2007, with 150 species (a WA state Christmas Bird Count record!).
  - High count of individual birds occurred in 2006, with 81,325.
  - Compilers: Stan and Dory Smith - 1970s to 1994; Betty Long - 1994 & 1995; Bob Boekelheide - 1995 to present

*Most Abundant Species:* (as Bob went through the species he delved into possible explanations for high populations):

- American Wigeon most abundant 23 of 33 years.
- Other consistently abundant species (Species that typically exceed 1000 individuals every year): Brant; Mallard; Northern Pintail; Green-winged Teal; Bufflehead; Dunlin; Large pink-legged gulls (Glaucous-winged Gulls & hybrids); American Robin (Bob noted that there are more American Robins in North America than people); Eur. Starling; Dark-eyed Junco; Brewer's Blackbird; Pine Siskin.

*Examples of species decreasing in numbers over the last 25 years:*

- Red-throated Loon; Common Loon; Horned Grebe; Western Grebe; Harlequin Duck; Surf Scoter; Common Goldeneye; Some shorebirds; Some gulls; Northern Shrike; Bewick's Wren; Winter Wren; American Dipper; European Starling; Western Meadowlark

*Examples of Increasing Species:* Bald Eagle; Cooper's Hawk; Rock Pigeon; Mourning Dove; Anna's Hummingbird; Downy Woodpecker; Steller's Jay; Common Raven

- Goals of Wednesday Morning Birdwalks at RR Bridge Park:
  1. Document the birds that use riparian habitats of the Dungeness River and other nearby habitats.
  2. Determine the annual cycle of these species.
  3. Determine, if possible, any annual variability in abundance of these species.
  4. Provide a citizen-science project for the River Center, thereby encouraging more people to be involved in understanding the birds of the north Olympic Peninsula.
  5. Develop new questions about the birds in our area.
- From Nov 2001 to Oct 2009, Dungeness River Audubon Center staff and volunteers have led 420 weekly bird walks through the riparian forest of the Dungeness River on one-half mile of the Olympic Discovery Trail: 126

bird species have been observed on the walks; Only one species, Song Sparrow, occurred on every walk; 12 species occurred on more than 90 percent of walks; 30 species occurred on more than 50 percent of walks; 96 species occurred on less than 50 percent of walks; 48 species occurred on less than 10 percent of walks; 17 species occurred only once

- Resident species occurring on 90% or more of walks: Steller's Jay (98.1%); Crow (94.5%); Black-capped Chickadee (91.0%); Chestnut-backed Chickadee (96.2%); Red-breasted Nuthatch (93.6%); American Robin (99.5%); European Starling (92.4%); Spotted Towhee (99.3%); Song Sparrow (100%); Dark-eyed Junco (91.7%); House Finch (95.5%); House Sparrow (92.1%).
- Questions: Pete Schroeder asked about birdfeeder counts for the Sequim Dungeness Christmas Count, Bob said that they are recorded in the totals but not reflected in the party hours. Michael Blanton asked about Gyrfalcons, Bob said that they have been spotted at Dungeness Bay and Dungeness Spit. Don Hatler asked if there is any local evidence of climate change effecting nesting or movement north to our area, Bob said that the best data he has is from the Christmas Bird Count data – they have found in Midwest and east birds moving their wintering to the north. Bob said that quail is introduced specie which have been brought in for hunting and were successful here, although introduction of bobwhites has never been successful.

#### **V. Other Business / Announcements – All**

- DRMT Elections: Shawn announced she had voting forms available, but no one was interested. Judy Larson nominated Pete Schroeder for the Executive Committee. Pete then moved for a unanimous decision of existing members to continue in their roles. Tyler Ahlgren seconded the motion to extend the term of the existing chair and executive committee, and the motion was unanimously passed. Chair and Executive Committee members accepted the commitment to serve another term. Chair: Steve Tharinger; Executive Committee Members: Steve Tharinger, Virginia Clark, Cynthia Nelson, Scott Chitwood, Robert Caldwell.
- Agenda Items for 2010:
  - January: Rule.
  - February: MOU and details of mitigation.
  - Group suggested the following agenda topics for 2010: On-going updates of Shoreline Management Plan; Stormwater Plan; Puget Sound Partnership; follow-up on poaching (per Mike Jeldness antidotal poaching stories); Randy Johnson to address what happened to the 2008 Washington Harbor project; Meadowbrook Creek and Ducks Unlimited (first of year); DOE/DOH briefing on reclaimed water (Frank Needham sits on group and said February would be a good time for this); Final report/update on NASA tools (Steve suggested Commissioner Dougherty speak on that topic); Update on irrigation piping (schedule this after irrigation starts- late spring); Progress and goals of restoration projects for Dungeness – Master Plan overview; Saltwater infusion – how, where, and how does it fit in vision; Land acquisition; Lead Entity Salmon Plan; EPA grants in PSP watershed characterization; GIS land base through analysis and how it relates to restoration projects; How salmon recovery relates to water quality/quantity and how it relates to land use; “Big picture goal” during project ranking – How do they fit together, long-term picture vs. projects – overview of tracking and timelines of projects (critical path methodology); Tim McNulty on Olympic Park expansion proposal; Streamkeepers on monitoring and adaptive management.
  - Steve brought up to group that the presentations at the DRMT are edifying and should be given to crowd of 100 not 20. Discussion on how to raise the education level and grow interest began. Some ideas to bring people in to meeting: Letters inviting people; good press; special presentations at quarterly or semi-annual basis; presentations on-line; evening meetings vs. day meetings; website needs to be current and add presentations there; set up FaceBook page; Reestablish relationship with Sierra Club – PSA on Wild River was worthwhile – Wild River designation on Dungeness; put descriptions/topics on peninsulaevents.com; when agenda is finalized and speakers confirmed, be sure it makes it in the “things to do” section of the local papers; ask Chamber of Commerce how to best publicize and piggy-back on any advertising of monthly events in the area.

#### **Public Comment**

- None.

#### **VI. Meeting Adjourned at 5:00 P.M.**

##### **Handouts:**

- Nothing was handed out at this meeting, however copies of an MOU between Clallam County, WFWF and Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and correspondence between WDFW and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe (available from Shawn Hines) were included in Kyle Guzlas' presentation.