

Nooksack FLIP Reach 2 Follow-up Meeting

Zoom Videoconference

April 17, 2020

Participants

Albert Deboer	Greg Ebe	Paul Knippel
Carol MacIlroy	Haylie Miller	Paula Harris
Chris Elder	Jason Hall	Rich Appel
Deborah Johnson	Karin Boyd	Steve Moddemeyer
Frank Corey	Mark Ewbank	Todd Bennett
Fred Likkel	Mike Maudlin	
Gary Goodall	Ned Currence	

Facilitator: David Roberts (Kulshan Services)

Note Taker: Deb Johnson

Purpose of event

- Review February charrette outcomes and recent efforts
- Review draft reach strategies and proposed next steps
- Gather feedback on proposed direction for Reach 2 technical work to advance charrette concepts and on the videoconference format

Meeting Summary

The videoconference was carried out using Zoom. Participants were welcomed and provided a brief overview of the meeting and the use of Zoom and Google “doc” tools.

Field Trip and Charrette Overview

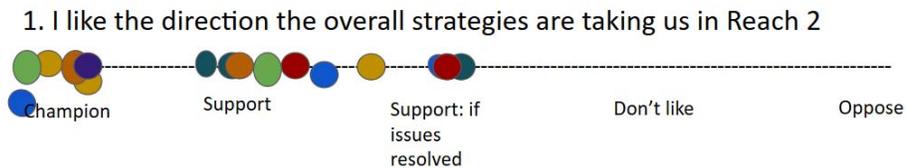
Steve Moddemeyer provided a quick look back at the field trip and charrette in February. He also provided a reminder of the FLIP Goals and the values developed at the Reach 2 charrette. Steve asked everyone for their thoughts and feedback on how the event went. Comments included:

- I liked that everyone who attended had a say, was vocal, and contributed easily
- I thought it was a great way to bring our community together.
- I thought it was a great start to the process.
- It was fun!
- Very useful to see conditions under a flood.

- It was nice to meet others and hear different inputs related to flood issues.
- Somewhat daunting to see how it all fits together.
- Excellent opportunity to interact at the human level.
- I thought there was great participation and enthusiasm for collaboration.
- I found seeing the floodplain during a flood very helpful.
- I hope we do what we talked about!

Process Review

Paula provided a summary of activities carried out by the County’s technical team since the charrette. She reflected back on the bigger ideas generated at the charrette and explained how some of the ideas with less support were wrapped into the larger concepts. She proposed some overarching strategies for the reach and asked for the group’s feedback regarding their support for each using a Google graphical tool shown below. The results indicate that there is support for the overall direction of the strategies. Some of the attendees are looking for issues to be resolved before stating stronger support for the strategies.



Presentations and Feedback

The technical team presented the key concepts resulting from the charrette and the steps the technical team will take to develop these concepts over the summer/fall. After each concept was presented, there was a question and answer session, and then attendees were asked to provide input regarding their level of support for the concept and direction for the technical work to develop it further.

Levee Modifications and Mainstem Habitat Improvements

Mark Ewbank presented the concepts developed by the technical team to develop Reach 2 levee modification and mainstem habitat improvement concepts. He showed an animation from the 2D model developed by Todd Bennett showing how flood waters filled and drained from the floodplain during the February 2020 flood. The following input was provided:

Rich Appel

- Can the video of the flood show impacts all the way down to Ferndale? Todd: This view zoomed in on upper Reach 2 area but the simulation includes all of the river length from Deming downstream including the Everson overflow corridor.
- The video is fairly telling of some of the issues. Let’s do a walk through in the field to discuss some of the issues after the flood (when we are able to all get on the ground together again)

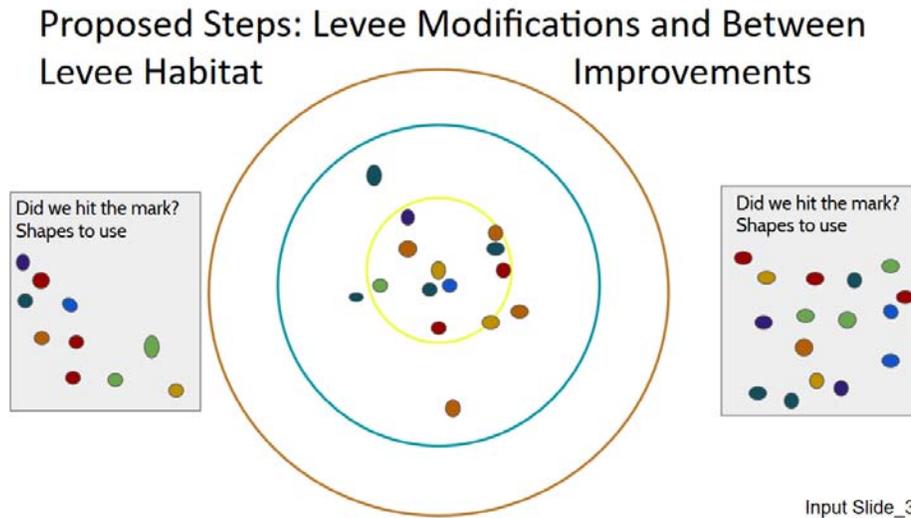
Other input

- We need to re-inventory river bank armor extent and condition.

- Consider using timber pilings to build wood habitat structures.

Conclusions: There is general agreement with the conceptual approach proposed by the technical team. Paula requested those who are not in full agreement to contact her with their thoughts.

See Google Doc diagram below with input from the whole group.



Tributary and Floodplain Corridor Improvements

Jason Hall presented the approach developed by the technical team to address Reach 2 tributary streams and floodplain overflow corridor improvement concepts resulting from the charrette. The following input was provided:

Michael Maudlin

- A habitat goal or target setting step is missing. How close are we getting to our goal?

Paula's response – a fish focus group of the more technical members of the Salmon Staff Team will define initial project concepts and specific habitat goals

Ned noted that we need an overarching check-in at some point when we roll these things together. What does this do for us? This effort will be a key part of our implementation of our salmon recovery plan.

- Paula will follow up with Ned/Michael on how we might do this
- Jason's response – we can roll in the habitat capacity analysis if we have targets to help inform project benefits and see how that moves the slider for increasing capacity – need to establish goals for rearing capacity which could be the tricky part

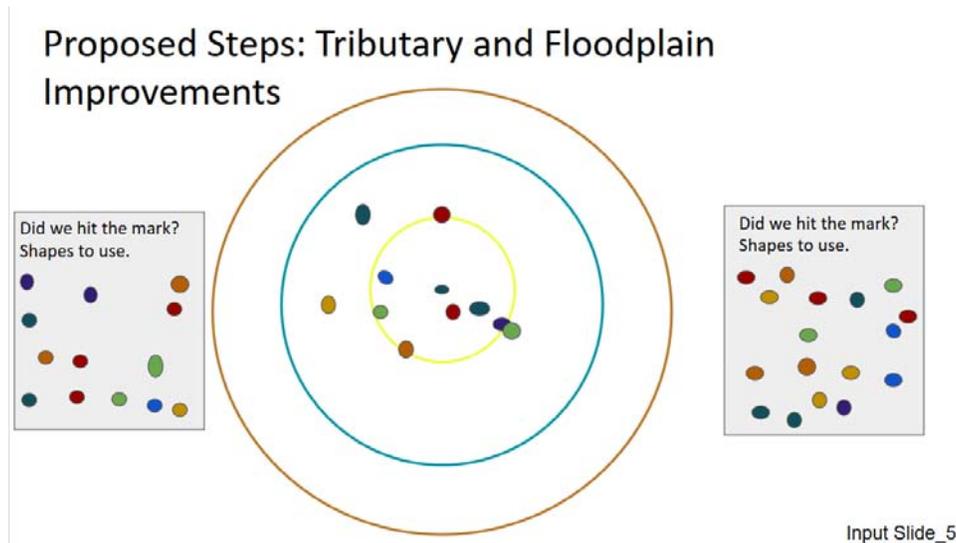
Others input

- Consider inset floodplain development/connectivity/channel morphology in the habitat conditions "departures"

- Benchmarks and goals are important for measuring results to build buy-in for future projects from impacted landowners

Conclusions: There is general agreement with the conceptual approach proposed by the technical team. Paula requested those who are not in full agreement to contact her with their thoughts.

See Google Doc diagram below with input from the whole group.



Ferndale Development Impacts Reduction

Todd Bennett presented the approach developed by the technical team to evaluate the impacts of future development planned in Ferndale that could be at risk of flooding based on current zoning and develop floodplain management strategies to reduce flood impacts. The following input was provided:

Haylie Miller

- Down-zoning those areas is not going to be easy; she ran it by the city administrator who said it is going to be critical to bring decision makers into that discussion
- Paula response – we understand that and the County will be there to support City staff and provide the science to support good decision-making

Discussion

- Mark Ewbank asked Haylie what comes after the model results are shared with the city? How much time is it likely going to take (months/years) to get definitive feedback from the City on the proposed changes in future development plans?

Haylie responded that downsizing the UGA will not be easy. They may be able to link it to their UGA expansion decisions. If we get the right people in the room we can get moving forward in a direction as long as the city administrator, public works director, and stormwater manager are on board. They could get something done pretty fast. This summer/fall seems reasonable if things get back to 'normal' (related to COVID-19).

- Chris Elder noted that the County's Comprehensive Plan is updated every 8 years. The next scheduled adoption date for the County and Ferndale plans is 2024. This is typically when UGA and city limits are changed. If we don't want to allow for any future development now (before 2024 comp plan update) we might need a temporary action agreed upon by the City. A permanent fix would be rolled into the next comp plan process.

Haylie responded that UGA expansion is usually part of a Comp Plan update. This would happen in 2024. There may be some questions about how the timing of an agreement would work with this lag in the timing of the 2024 Comp Plan.

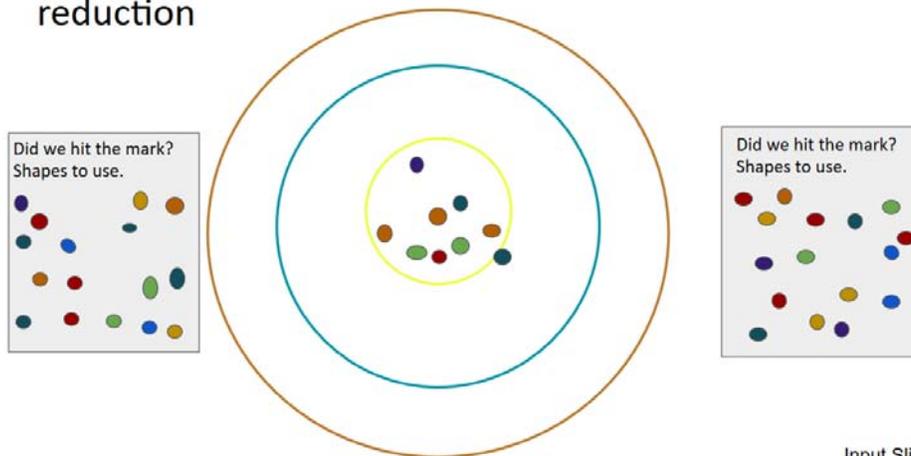
Others input

- Would be worth engaging County Planning Department early on in this process as well
- UGA expansion is a very good strategy for moving forward

Conclusions: There is good agreement with the conceptual approach proposed by the technical team. Paula requested that any concerns should be sent her way.

See Google Doc diagram below with input from the whole group.

Proposed Steps: Ferndale development impacts reduction



Input Slide_7

Incentives Program

Chris Elder talked about the applicability of drainage-based management and presented the concepts outlined by the technical team to develop an incentives program(s) as discussed at the charrette. The following input was provided:

Ned Currence

- We need a better understanding of drainage-based management (DBM) and how it works.
- Where is the step where we prioritize the concerns for fish? We need to make sure we are tackling the right things and tracking how far we are getting towards our recovery goals.

Chris shared there will be multiple opportunities for the fish and ag people to provide input to the goals and strategies development.

- Ned noted that the Nooksack Tribe is looking for a significant uplift for salmon, not just maintaining status quo. They want to make sure there is an overarching strategy – not a piecemeal project by project approach.

Chris noted that the general feedback from the farmers is that they have strong support for habitat restoration as long as farmers can be assured that they have a legal right to irrigate their crops. This may not be true of all farmers, but he has seen support as they move through the DBM process.

- Ned asked where the step is that prioritizes salmon? Is that step in DBM or does that happen here at the FLIP discussions?

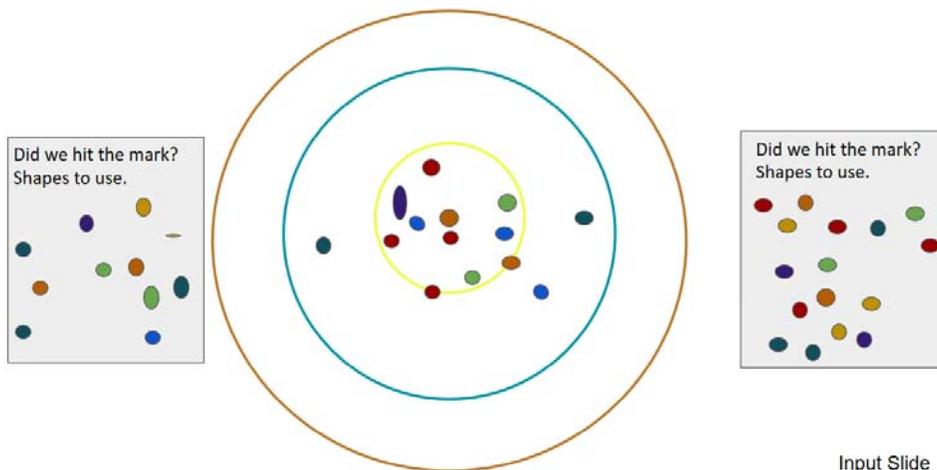
Others input

- If farms don't have adequate water ag will disappear. Salmon will follow.
- Preserving agriculture is a key component for salmon recovery.
- Incentives could include things like certainty under the regulations or Endangered Species Act if certain actions are taken
- Consider deed restrictions for riparian protections
- Assess how nimble programs are to allow quick movement as landowner motivations may rapidly change
- Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (USFWS)?
- We need better mechanisms to use the existing "assets" more fully to achieve our common values.

Conclusions: There is general agreement with the conceptual approach proposed by the technical team based on DBM. Clearly there are outstanding issues that still need to be ironed out and questions yet to be addressed. Paula requested those who are not in full agreement to contact her with their thoughts.

See Google Doc diagram below with input from the whole group.

Proposed Steps: Incentives



Next Steps

David reviewed the outcomes of the day and then discussed the next steps in the process. He shared that:

- The technical team heard everyone and wants to keep hearing more
- More analysis and modeling is planned to refine these ideas from the charrette.
- There are plans for a lot of project-focused local outreach and discussions to come.
- There is an exciting range of possibilities coming together. The technical team is looking forward to working with everyone to add the detail to move projects forward, and is confident in its ability to make good progress this spring and summer, to have results to share with this group in the fall.

Meeting Evaluation

David thanked everyone for their participation and patience with the technology. He then asked for everyone's feedback on how this meeting worked for them. Most people found the meeting helpful and some folks are eager to see more of the details as we move forward.

How Did Today Go?



Please note: The presentation shared at the meeting is available on the County's River and Flood Program FLIP website.