



FINAL MEETING MINUTES

(approved March 11, 2010)

PRCC Habitat Subcommittee Conference Call

Thursday, February 23, 2010

8:00 am

PRCC Habitat Subcommittee Members

Dale Bambrick, NMFS

Chris Fisher, CCT

Bob Rose, Lee Carlson, YN

Dennis Beich, Casey Baldwin, WDFW

David Morgan, USFWS

Ben Lenz, GCPUD

Carl Merkle, CTUIR

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

Meeting Attendees:

Lee Carlson, YN

Dale Bambrick, NMFS

Ben Lenz, GCPUD

Richelle Beck, DRA

David Morgan, USFWS

Dennis Beich, WDFW

Denny Rohr, Facilitator

The purpose of this conference call was to discuss the Nason Creek LWP Floodplain Reconnection Assessment, also known as the BNSF Project. Rohr began the call by noting the Specification Sheet for this project had been received and sent via e-mail to the entire Habitat Sub-Committee on Friday, Feb. 19. In addition, a planning meeting for this project had been set for March 3, 10:30 am – 3:00 pm, at the Wenatchee Community Center. According to the Spec Sheet, the project sponsors are requesting \$49,583 from the (PRCC) Habitat SC for an Alternatives Analysis. The cost for the Alternatives Analysis is listed as \$99,166 with \$49,583 to be funded by the SRFB and \$49,583 requested to be funded by the Habitat SC. Rohr asked for Committee Member's thoughts on this project.

Chris Fisher was unable to attend the call but spoke with Rohr prior to the meeting and requested Rohr inform the Committee Members of the following comments: He votes yes on the \$49,583 but does have some concerns. First, he discussed the July 2011 construction start date and how reasonably certain that start date is likely to occur. Is this a realistic timeline? Second, he expressed concerns over what appears to be much

latitude to Chelan County Natural Resources Department (CCNRD) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company for preferred alternative selection. He feels the Committee should be more involved with the alternative assessment process.

David Morgan stated there is an IDT team that Kaputa (CCNRD) is proposing to convene and Morgan volunteered to be part of that group. (IDT info is listed under Project Partners and Roles in the Project Spec Sheet.) Morgan also noted that the Bureau has conducted extensive studies on this reach, and their "Reach Assessment" report lays out several options, so he assumes the IDT will chose among those, rather than starting from scratch. Regarding the timeline question, there are no guarantees that the timeline will be met, and therefore Habitat SC involvement and monitoring is important. Morgan also noted a concern of his is how the final 30% of the design project will be funded. Lee Carlson stated he had spoken with a CCNRD representative who believes \$49,583 from the Habitat SC and \$49,583 from the SRFB will cover the Phase 1 Alternatives Analysis (30% completed design), and the contribution from the Bureau will cover the costs up to Phase 3 (75% completed design). Carlson also was not clear as to how the final 30% of the design project was to be funding. Accordingly, Committee Members will discuss this question at the March 3 planning meeting. Committee Members also commented that funding for construction will be dealt with when the time comes.

Dale Bambrick stated this project will end up being a multi-million dollar project, and he doesn't see a way to push Chelan County out of the way unless they aren't able to pull it all off. He also share's Chris' concern regarding the timeframe but overall, does not feel it is a big deal because ultimately, it's only \$49,583. Bambrick supports providing the funding.

Ben Lenz suggested they contractually ask for a product that specifies one or both alternative analyses reports should be reviewed and approved by the Committee. Only then would Grant PUD be comfortable recommending funding for this project. In addition, he noted the PUD cannot pay for work performed before a Habitat Funding Agreement signed by both parties is in place, so they will need to make that clear. They can discuss this at the March 3 strategy session. He also added that he would like to have the alternatives analysis include some review and analysis of the Squadroni property. Morgan reported CCNRD said they don't think it's viable to put 100% of the flow back in the channel S of the RR because that'd leave Squadroni (and others on the N side) high and dry. What this means for possible habitat restoration adjacent to Squadroni remains to be seen, but he'd bring it up in the IDT meetings. Lenz said there are still concerns about what exactly the product is and that it seems a bit up in the air. However, the PUD is able to approve the \$49,583, but this doesn't mean it's a done deal though.

The group briefly discussed the strategy session on March 3. Morgan, Beich, Carlson, Lenz, Fisher, and possibly Bambrick will likely be attending. The Committee intends to discuss their need to review and accept alternatives as a Committee prior to final approval, and that this intention shall be written into the contract.

Rohr took a vote of the committee members: Morgan, Bambrick, Carlson, Beich, Lenz, and Fisher (prior to the call) all voted yes to move forward with providing the \$49,583 funding for this phase of the project. The group agreed it would be a good idea for Lenz to call Kaputa to discuss the Committee's decision on the contract prior to the March 3 meeting so he is aware of the Committee's actions.

The Committee briefly discussed the Tall Timbers property proposal that was discussed at the Feb 11th Habitat SC meeting. Dennis Beich stated there was a White River public meeting held on Saturday, February 20, in Leavenworth. At the meeting, Beich talked to Bob Bugert of Chelan-Douglas Land Trust (CDLT) and asked if anyone had talked to Tall Timbers about a potential acclimation site within a conservation easement being proposed on Tall Timbers property by the CDLT. From the discussion, Beich concluded that this has not happened. Accordingly, after Committee discussion, Beich and Committee Members commented that discussion with Tall Timbers regarding a potential acclimation site on the proposed property should take place. Further, the discussion needs to occur through Bugert since he would be doing the negotiating regarding the 20 acre conservation easement. Morgan reported that CDLT confirmed that YN and Tall Timbers had discussions going back at least a year regarding another piece of property for a potential YN acclimation site, adjacent to but separate from the proposed easement property Beich is referring to. Additionally, the Committee felt there needs to be conversation between Grant and Bugert to make sure that acclimation may still be possible in this area, and that different parcels, easement restrictions, funding source, etc would have to be considered. Rohr stated the PRCC will be discussing this issue at their meeting on Feb. 24th as the funding is to be from the NNI Fund and needs their approval. He suggested it may be best to get through that discussion first before any additional discussions take place. Overall, some committee members don't want to fund a conservation easement that prohibits construction of acclimation on the 20 acre Tall Timber project proposal, but other committee members have not gone on the record saying that, and believe there could be other ways to support acclimation in this area without involving an eased property or Tributary Committee funds..

(submitted by D. Rohr & Associates, Inc.)