

Project Strategy for Addressing STAC Sub-Group Recommendations

BACKGROUND:

In September 2006, lead project consultant ESA Adolfson (Adolfson) submitted to staff the *Shoreline Inventory and Characterization Report – STAC Review Draft (Draft I&C Report)*. CD copies of this report were provided to all members of the 15-person Shoreline Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) on September 13th, requesting review and comments due by October 4th. Staff received comments from 7 STAC members by October 4th, and comments from 4 additional STAC members by October 13th.

On October 11, 2006, six members of the STAC met independently to discuss the *Draft I&C Report* and the STAC comments that had been previously submitted to staff. This STAC sub-group produced a draft meeting summary document and presented it during the joint STAC and SPAC meeting on October 13th. The summary document notes that the major conclusions and recommendations therein may not represent the views of those STAC members who were not present. The meeting summary was finalized and provided to staff on November 2, 2006 and subsequently distributed via email to both the STAC and the SPAC.

PROJECT STRATEGY:

While the STAC sub-group meeting summary recommendations were discussed during the joint STAC-SPAC meeting, the project team of staff and consultants has given further consideration as to how each might be addressed. Below, the project team strategy response follows each STAC sub-group recommendation, listed in the order provided in the final meeting summary document:

KEY:

- The “☑” symbol indicates action has been/will be taken to address the STAC sub-group recommendation.
- The “↔” symbol indicates that pertinent information regarding this issue is still pending that will determine if/what action will be taken.
- The “☒” symbol indicates that the STAC sub-group recommendation will not be accommodated, but clarifying information may be provided as part of the strategy response.

Members present at this meeting collectively agreed that the recommendations provided below (in addition to those provided in earlier communications from all other STAC members) would help to fulfill this purpose by strengthening the report and provide the SPAC an improved technical basis for developing effective goals, policies, and regulations in updating the Jefferson County’s Shoreline Master Program (SMP).

☑ **Strategy Response:** It is important to note the role of the SPAC is to advise the project team in the development of goals, policies, designations and regulations for a Preliminary Draft SMP proposal. While the SPAC will not be asked to develop such components of the SMP independently, it is important that the supporting technical documentation is useful and sufficient for both the project team and their advisors. The *Draft I&C Report* will be finalized to fully meet the requirements of the 2003 SMP Guidelines (WAC 173-26-201(3)(c) and (d)).

Major Recommendations

A. We recommend that the title of this report be modified to the following: Inventory and General Characterization Report. We recommend this change in title to reflect the understanding that this product is one step in the characterization process that Jefferson County is undertaking to provide information sufficient for assessing and documenting the processes and functions of shorelines.

It's our understanding that the Restoration Report for marine shorelines from Battelle, including the characterization scoring of freshwater sub-basins developed by DOE, may be used through an iterative process to support this Inventory and (General) Characterization Report. Ultimately, both reports will assist the SPAC in developing effective goals, policies, and regulations most notably shoreline designations and development standards. We look forward to reviewing and commenting on the Restoration Report with this concept in mind.

Strategy Response: The Purpose section of the *I&C Report* will be revised to further clarify that the report is one step in the characterization process and one element of the process for identifying baseline conditions. In addition, the section of the 2003 SMP Guidelines that states the characterization may be of a generalized nature will be referenced (WAC 173-26-201(3)(d)(i)(B)(II)). Because the report meets this description, the project team does not feel that renaming the report is necessary.

To clarify, the work product from Battelle Marine Sciences Laboratory (Battelle) is not a "Restoration Report" *per se*, but is best referred to as a "prioritization module" that consists of data scoring Excel workbooks, and a scoring and prioritization methodology. This prioritization "tool" analyzes conditions at multiple scales (watershed, drift cell reach, and ShoreZone unit) and uses multiple factors (watershed condition, geomorphology etc.) to score the functions and stressors of marine shorelines. By changing the values for certain factors in the workbook spreadsheets that might be changed by a specific restoration activity or policy, the tool can be used to forecast the relative effectiveness of a proposed restoration effort or policy implementation. This helps prioritize the "best bang for the buck" for various restoration/policy alternatives.

One factor used to determine watershed condition is the hydrological alterations scoring provided by Stanley and Grigsby (WA Dept. of Ecology '05, '06). This work identifies sub-basin areas important to water delivery, movement and loss in a watershed, and the alterations that affect those processes. Beyond supporting the Battelle prioritization work, a short report and summary maps describing this work will be provided by the authors that may also be useful for finalizing the *I&C Report* and for other purposes.

Information from the Battelle and Ecology assessments will be incorporated into a Draft Restoration Plan for Jefferson County, which will be distributed to the STAC for review. The restoration plan is being prepared to meet the requirement of WAC 173-26-201(2)(f).

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B. Improve the Organizational Structure and Framework of the Report – Using, perhaps, the Whatcom County Inventory and Characterization Report as an example, restructure the report to go from a landscape scale to smaller scales (*e.g.*, ecosystem to reach scale and beyond) and provide for a better linkage between ecosystem and shoreline processes/functions and the effect of landscape alterations on the structure and function of shoreline reaches. This would involve integrating the characterization of ecosystem processes section with the reach scale inventory and analyses including: description of the important areas for ecosystem processes, how they have been altered at the landscape and reach scale, what the ecosystem “response” to these alterations has been at the reach scale, and what the appropriate objectives and measures for protection and restoration should be. Presenting the characterization information in this format, including the use of analysis tables and summary maps directly in the report, would provide the information necessary for the SPAC to make scientifically based decisions on reach designations and development standards and regulations. Smaller scale units (such as DNR ShoreZone units) are more preferable for organization and analysis.

Strategy Response: The *Draft I&C Report* is structured to go from a landscape scale to smaller scales (basin and reach) as suggested. The Ecosystem Characterization section describes the important areas for ecosystem processes and how they have been altered at the landscape level. The subsequent Reach Inventory and Analysis section describes the basin/reach conditions resulting from (in response to) the alterations. While the report is mostly sufficient to support staff making scientifically-based decisions on shoreline environment designations and development standards and regulations, some re-organization and additional characterization (including adding summary tables) will be made to improve the report’s utility to the project team’s policy advisors.

Given Battelle’s use of ShoreZone units in their nearshore restoration prioritization for this project and the extent of the marine shoreline being analyzed (~202 miles), the project team believes it is not practical or necessary to use smaller reaches for this part of the I&C analysis. In municipalities with limited shoreline area (*i.e.* Bainbridge Island has ~53 miles of marine shoreline) it’s more practical to use smaller reaches for analysis.

The *Draft I&C Report* is intended to expand upon and improve the *2005 Shoreline Inventory and Analysis ('05 Inventory)* developed by County staff Neil Harrington. Therefore, the format and outline are based on that original document. The project scope and budget funded by Ecology were predicated on the assumption that the *'05 Inventory* would provide the basis for the revised document. Given the comparatively limited resources allocated for this component of the project, the project team feels it is not possible to reproduce what was done for the Whatcom County I&C report as suggested.

C. Include additional Shorelines of the State that meet the SMP criteria (*e.g.*, missing lakes and rivers) and are not currently identified in the draft report – See USGS report by Kresch, 1998 and Bahls et al., 2006.

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↔ **Strategy Response:** This topic of expanding the shorelines under the County's SMP jurisdiction has been addressed in previous meetings and is identified as a data gap. Including additional shorelines beyond the existing list was not funded as a component of the Adolfson agreement nor included in the County's grant agreement with Ecology. The project team is working with Ecology to secure additional resources to address this issue.

D. Improve the description, analysis, and discussion of the marine and freshwater processes sections (*e.g.*, marine riparian and shoreline habitat forming processes, freshwater temperature information).

Strategy Response: A majority of the comments received from individual STAC members through the official review and comment process and during the October 13th joint SPAC and STAC meeting will be addressed to expand and improve components of the *Draft I&C Report*. In addition, the I&C findings will be integrated with the Battelle restoration prioritization work (provided to Adolfson December 1st) and Ecology's hydrological alterations work (Adolfson receipt anticipated December 15th) during the development of a Draft Restoration Plan.

E. Include missing, more appropriate, or updated citations throughout the report and maps, and support all general conclusions with appropriate documentation.

Strategy Response: As the *I&C Report* is finalized, numerous citations will be added and/or updated. These revisions will include any specific citations identified as missing by committee members through the official review and comment process as well as citations deemed useful and appropriate by the project team. A matrix will be included to summarize what sources are utilized for the narrative and visual components of the report.

F. Include specific reference to salmon recovery plans (*i.e.*, summer chum and chinook) to leverage other conservation and restoration efforts, fill data gaps, and integrate research, monitoring, and evaluation plans.

Strategy Response: The summer Chum recovery plan is one of many data sources reviewed for developing the *Draft I&C Report*. Additional opportunities to "leverage" the information contained in that plan and similar reports will be sought to help achieve the goals of the recommendation.

G. Assure that the report consistently contains the most comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date information to properly depict Jefferson County's shorelines (data layers and narratives) and to enable the development of summary or synthesis maps of these shorelines. Examples of missing or incomplete information include CMZ/ floodplains, forage fish beach spawning surveys, erosional/accretional shoreforms, wildlife distributions, fish distributions, platted lots and current development conditions, and riparian information.

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Strategy Response: While every effort was made to incorporate and use the most current and accurate data sets, not all of the data sets obtained and reviewed are represented on the maps. The maps depict a select subset of the GIS data used to create the inventory and characterization.

Reasons for this include:

- There are limits to what can be effectively depicted on 11 x 17 sheets;
- Resources are not available to print and produce large format maps depicting all data layers at a fine scale of resolution;
- The strength of the GIS system is that it can be queried, viewed and plotted in myriad ways and at multiple scales to produce a wide variety of maps as needed.

It is important to remember that the maps should/will remain supplemental to the goals, policies, designations and regulations of the SMP. While the I&C maps are an important source of information for the SMP update effort, they represent one snapshot in time and are only one of many planning tools available for updating and implementing the SMP. Because nearly all of the County's shorelines support or have the potential to support important ecological resources, the project team cautions against over-dependence on specific maps/data sets, but rather encourages and strives to develop policies to protect the resources, using the maps as a potential indicator of where the resources do or could occur.

Since completion of the *Draft I&C Report*, some additional information has been obtained that will be incorporated into the final document and map folio. The project team greatly appreciates the assistance STAC members have provided in this effort. Several additional maps will be included in the final *I&C Report*:

- The draft CMZ mapping based on the official county-designated CMZs will be updated to show the undesignated CMZs in the west part of the County based on the available data.
- The draft forage fish spawning data will be updated to include the NOSC data set, which is included in the WDFW 2006 Priority Habitat data.
- Parcel maps showing individual parcels and vacant lands will be produced for use at committee meetings.
- A map of public conservation lands for Eastern Jefferson County will be produced.
- A map showing forest cover and impervious surfaces for Eastern Jefferson County will be produced.
- A map of shellfish beaches/harvest areas based on current DOH data will be produced.
- A new map depicting geomorphic classes and salt marshes using data from Battelle and PNPTC will be produced.

No additional information on shoreforms has been identified (the data presented are based on ShoreZone), but the Battelle work classifies individual shore segments based on geomorphic units as part of the scoring exercise, so this information will be added to the I&C map set. The project team does not know of any additional datasets for riparian areas, fish distribution, or wildlife that would be required to develop the goals and policies of the SMP, and believes the data available are adequate for moving forward with policy development.

H. Develop summary or synthesis maps of shoreline units that are color-coded to depict the ecological functions and values of these units. Perhaps the

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Restoration Report and accompanying data layers from Battelle, DOE, and Jefferson County will also further inform this effort.

Strategy Response: The Battelle prioritization module is supplemented by color-coded maps that show restoration potential based on function and stressor scores at both the drift cell scale and ShoreZone unit scale. These maps will be made available.

I. Add a “7th step” to the SMP update process, one that will develop a research, monitoring, and adaptive management plan designed to evaluate both the implementation and effectiveness (on-the-ground) of the updated SMP in achieving No-Net-Loss. An example of this type of effort would be to learn from the effectiveness of the existing SMP as Jefferson County goes through the update process. Such a step may need to occur at a broader level to integrate with the county’s Comprehensive Plan and Critical Areas Ordinance.

Strategy Response: The project team will direct this issue to Ecology, who is responsible for developing the guidelines that local jurisdictions must follow when developing and implementing SMPs. While conceptually valid, there currently is no “7th step” in the state’s process, nor is this identified as an element of the Ecology-funded effort for Jefferson County. This idea would provide additional opportunity for collaborative efforts at the local level. Organizations interested to pursue such joint efforts in Jefferson County are encouraged to contact staff.

J. To assist county staff and their contractors in making the necessary changes to the report, we recommend that the STAC remain engaged in the process well beyond the Shoreline Charrette Primer.

Strategy Response: The project team greatly appreciates the participation of our technical advisors and the STAC sub-group’s interest and willingness for continued involvement with the process. The letter that invited STAC participation (sent in ~April 2006) outlined the documents anticipated for STAC review, including the Consistency Report, ’05 Inventory, Shoreline Inventory & Characterization Report, Restoration Plan, Preliminary Draft SMP, and Cumulative Impacts Analysis. These documents have/will become available throughout the course of the update process, and some may go back and forth for iterative review by the two committees.

While there have been some shifts to the project timeline, it was never the project team’s intention to end STAC involvement after the Shoreline Charrette Primer. Indeed, having both our technical and policy advisors participate in the full Shoreline Charrette will be critical to the success of this dynamic, community planning workshop. The project team looks forward to continuing work with our technical advisors as the project progresses. In addition, three STAC members have dual assignments on the SPAC by nature of their organizational affiliation. This should help maintain connectivity between the two groups. While regular meetings were/are not anticipated for the STAC, additional meetings may be scheduled as needed, and as timeline and budget allow.

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Other, more specific, recommendations discussed at the meeting included the following:

- Snow-dominated zones
- Wetlands and riparian area as nutrient sinks and not aquifers
- Important habitat observations (*e.g.*, kelp along the Strait of Juan de Fuca)
- Important watershed characteristics (*e.g.*, % vegetated cover, road crossings, forest cover characterizations)
- Pathogens, toxins, and metals in the nearshore
- Habitat impediments in addition to Highway 101 road crossings (*e.g.*, CMZ-floodplains, flood hazard reduction information)

Strategy Response: The project team notes the above topics were discussed. Some individual STAC member comments address these more specifically.