

Toward a Natural Asset Management Plan for Kitsap County KNRAMP Workshop Summary

Date: 10/24/24

Attendees: Steve Todd (Suquamish Tribe), Marla Powers (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe), Chloe Donaldson (Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe), Brittany Gordon (Kitsap County), Irene Weber (Kitsap County), Jonathan Raine (Kitsap County), Kirvie Mesebeluu-Yobech (Kitsap County), Jade Jarvis (Kitsap County), Jessica Smith (Kitsap County), Mindy Roberts (WA Conservation Action Education Fund), Robinson Low (WA Conservation Action Education Fund), Jamie Glasgow (Wild Fish Conservancy), Dana Stefan (Ross Strategic), Casey Hart (Ross Strategic).

Next Steps

- WCAEF will continue working on the pilot watershed implementation actions based on Core Team feedback, identify where riparian vegetation overlaps with protected forests, and draft a Pilot Implementation memo due in December 2024.
- Ross Strategic will continue developing the County-Wide Decision-Making Framework and share a final draft with the Core Team.
- Core Team members are encouraged to share examples to include in the Framework to showcase the decision-making process.
- Kitsap County and the Tribes will coordinate further on the project replacement for water typing.

Introduction, Workshop Objectives, and Approach

Dana Stefan (Ross Strategic) welcomed the Core Team, reviewed the agenda items, and framed the desired outcomes of the meeting. The meeting's focus was to:

1. Provide an update on the pilot watershed actions and discuss next steps including partner connections.
2. Review and provide feedback on the draft KNRAMP County-Wide Decision-Making Process steps and draft evaluation factors that are meant to establish an ongoing process to identify future geographies and actions for KNRAMP to focus on and provide KNRAMP information in a format that other County departments and partners can use.

Pilot Watershed Actions: Updates and Next Steps

Robinson (WCAEF) provided an overview of continued work on identified scenarios to improve LOS toward DLOS in Big Beef Creek and Chico Creek pilot watersheds. He reviewed forest and shoreline assets in each pilot watershed, providing maps and actions based on Core Team feedback from the June 2024 workshop. Next steps include refining actions based on further Core Team feedback, understanding where riparian vegetation overlaps with protected forests, and drafting a memo for December for actions to be carried out in 2025.

Core Team members provided feedback on forest and shoreline action (based on the below questions) and WCAEF provided further clarifications:

Questions requesting feedback on forest and shoreline actions:

- Are there any other parcels to account for expanding percent forest cover and mature forests?
- Are there any other actions currently underway for forests or shorelines?
- Are there any roadblocks actions not accounted for?
- What workarounds can we identify for any roadblocks?

Big Beef Creek and Chico Creek Forests – discussion highlights:

- **Monitoring and tracking Level of Service (LOS):**
 - The current DLOS in the watershed assumes that the other parcels (not part of the pilot watershed actions) do not have a declining LOS; consider the possibility of unknown parcels where DLOS may be in decline and needs to be preserved.
 - Manage a balance of both tracking losses and gains, such as tracking forest LOS on private land with the County Land Fire (five-year interval) data.
 - Consider monitoring separately the private versus public (e.g. DNR) land by looking first at the big parcels.
 - Consider existing work from other organizations in the area.
- **Considering land protection strategies, development considerations, and public vs. private land:**
 - It is important to focus on both restoration and preservation. Consider looking at unincorporated/undeveloped properties to prevent non-conforming lots that could result in loss of forest cover.
 - It may be preferred to pursue easements rather than acquisitions when possible and consider both proactive and reactive measures.
 - Consider opportunities for land swaps.
 - Big Beef Creek will likely not be as developed but Kingston and Silverdale urban growth areas (UGAs) should be focused on. LOS might have to be compensated where able to be improved. It may be helpful to see this built as a scenario. There is a [Buildable Lands Program/Analysis](#)¹ that could be looked at.
 - Essential fish habitat (type E) should be protected. Data from Wild fish Conservancy can be leveraged to identify those habitats.
 - Federal or military land parcels have not been considered for forest actions under the pilot watersheds. The Core Team suggested to consider Camp McKean for Chico Creek in future implementation phases.
 - Wetlands and lakes should be subtracted from the land cover because they will never be forested.
 - Continuous land areas connect wildlife corridors, which may provide an advantage in pursuing funding.
- **Considering collaboration with organizations that have existing work in the pilot watersheds:**
 - **Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC)** can help acquire lands.
 - **Alpine Evergreen Company** - WCAEF will identify if one of the large parcels in Big Beef Creek belongs to this company.
 - **WDFW** works to purchase properties next to their existing properties to improve connection between forested areas and wildlife corridors. This helps to access grant applications such as wildlife grants.
 - **Kitsap County Parks** - Irene Weber is a good resource to connect with Department of Natural Resources (DNR). DNR and GPC have had issues putting land into protection because managing these properties long-term requires significant staff and resources. Parks is also doing restorative thinning to encourage more rapid forest recovery which can sometimes pay for itself.

¹ Buildable Lands Program is part of Washington State's Growth Management Act (GMA). The Buildable Lands Report looks at the City of Bainbridge Island, City of Bremerton, City of Poulsbo, City of Port Orchard, and unincorporated areas of Kitsap County to review if they are growing as planned.

- **Wild Fish Conservancy** has been helping with water typing which helps improve regulatory measures and buffers. They can quantify buffer types for streams following surveys using GIS. They have been working on this with Big Beef Creek.
- **Long-term planning and updates:**
 - Annual LOS status tracking and updates to the Core Team (Advisory Group) will be important to account for progress but also rapidly changing LOS (e.g., forest cut).
 - It would be more effective to work at a greater institutional scale than just with individual landowners.
 - While mature forests take decades to grow, progress will be monitored regularly by the Core Team (Advisory Group) with frequency to be determined based on available county/state data.

Big Beef Creek and Chico Creek Shorelines – discussion highlights:

- WCAEF had a conversation with Kitsap Public Health District (KPHD) about the Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) Program that they are managing and the shellfish harvest areas addressed in the pilot watersheds. KPHD has been working in Chico Creek to restore the shellfish harvest area and anticipates that it will be fully open in the next year or two. Big Beef Creek shellfish harvest area is still closed because of the open hatchery in the area. Kitsap County could work with the Fish and Wildlife Service and KPHD to determine how the Big Beef Creek area can be opened again; there is also a bridge flagged to be upgraded which could be leveraged for this effort. A PIC program is helping with improvements so Kitsap County funding is not needed for these actions.
- A desktop exercise could help determine the feasibility of removing houses close to shorelines. WCAEF can further investigate this and Kitsap County could conduct an educational campaign through the Shore Friendly program.
- KPHD can help with monitoring and water quality testing for streams.

County-Wide Decision-Making Framework for KNRAMP Goals

Dana reviewed a draft County-wide Decision-Making Framework for KNRAMP, which includes goals, steps for using KNRAMP information in County Decision-Making, geographical and qualitative evaluation considerations, and a shoreline hypothetical example.

Clarifications and Core Team feedback included:

- **Annual data updates:** Annual data updates will be helpful to show progress and track LOS status changes, including rapid changes that can decrease the LOS such as new deforestation and development. Some data sources leveraged by KNRAMP (through Cartegraph) are refreshed in real time such as changes to stream maps, while others, such as forest growth, may not update for years. The Core Team assumes that annual updates will have some but not all updated data annually.
- **Reporting and communication:**
 - An annual KNRAMP report as proposed in the Framework would be helpful to show the work of Kitsap County departments and partners, and progress in the areas and actions tracked by the Core Team (Advisory Group).
 - In the future, Kitsap County Departments could attend Core Team meetings to hear updates, and KNRAMP staff could attend Department meetings (e.g., Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan update process meetings) to share where KNRAMP is identifying priority areas, ask about project proposals, and look for overlaps and funding opportunities.
- **Connections between KNRAMP and other County departments:**
 - The KC Stormwater department has connections with KNRAMP particularly as it relates to shoreline and erosion actions.

- The KC Parks Department’s goals align with KNRAMP. KNRAMP can help the Parks Department advocate for funding. The Parks Department also finds prioritization across the County helpful to convey as part of their planning processes. It can point to areas that need more work and provide reasoning why other projects are not being focused on. It can also help provide a checkpoint of prioritization if a project comes up to shared interests.
- **Geographical focus:** It would be helpful for the Core team (Advisory Group) to have when going through the decision-making process:
 - Maps of the geographical areas of focus with the LOS
 - Targeted geographical analysis identifying existing efforts (from KC County departments and other organizations) in those specific geographies.
- **Helpful additions to current work:**
 - WCAEF can further develop a slider tool to see impacts of each attribute to the overall LOS. Actions will be impacted by how large the management unit is.
 - KNRAMP information could help guide priorities, such as planting forests sooner because results are long-term. In parallel, actions like removing shoreline could be prioritized to provide near-term, visible benefits.
 - It can be difficult in some cases to understand LOS impacts when project benefits, like forest growth, take many years. One suggested option is to include in the annual KNRAMP report the number of acres preserved or under restoration, along with the predicted DLOS and the expected timeline.
 - Provide more specific examples in the framework, such as timeline of benthic community response to water quality improvements.
 - The pilot projects are a learning lab while next year actions will be put in motion to see what is measurable, what needs refinement, and what has or has not shown up in the data.

Core Team Updates

Kitsap County Update:

- The Critical Areas Ordinance was adopted.
- The KC noxious weed program is continuing.
- The County’s presentations to the Habitat Strategic Initiative Advisory Team, Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC), and West Sound Partners for Ecosystem Recovery (WSPER) have been well received. The County is presenting at an Open Space Forum with Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe the week of October 28, 2024.
- October 28th is the last opportunity for comments and updates to the KC Comprehensive Plan including on a tree code. The Planning Commission supported the tree code with amendments. The code, along with the Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Facilities Plan is going forward to the Commission on October 28th.
- Kitsap County Stormwater is observing implementation of projects from earlier in the year. Some projects are tracked in Cartegraph and conducted in coordination with the Army Corps, WDFW, and others, so implementation may take a while. There are many retrofit projects in different phases of construction. One project involved restoration of a CMP pipe. Stormwater audits a certain linear feet per year of pipe and determines how it should be repaired.
- A major natural resource project for the Parks Department is an analysis of forests that will result in a series of planning documents. The KC Forest Stewardship Plan outlining a trajectory toward stable and resilient land will be revised by the end of the year. The plan has undergone major revisions, but core elements remain the same. Once finalized, the plan will be reviewed by external experts and commissioners and rolled out for implementation in 2025 with the goal to review projects over the next 10 years to improve forest health.

Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe:

- The Tribe has an open space bootcamp with the Planning Association of WA the week of 10/25 to talk about open space ideas. Brittany Gordon (Kitsap County) agreed to speak at the meeting about KNRAMP.
- The Tribe received a NOAA grant for Hood Canal bridge work. This can be added to KNRAMP's project list to support fish.
- A lot of work has been done on culvert and junction projects. Eighty-seven projects are being monitored.
- The Tribe is attending bi-weekly "Kitsap 29 bundle meetings."
- The Tribe is looking at a grant for near-term shore restoration to improve rip-rap and old concrete in streams.
- Chloe Donaldson is the new Environmental Program Manager for the Tribe.

Suquamish Tribe Update:

- Tribal staff are wrapping up 400 fish barrier structure assessments in the Bremerton area. They assessed these in two years. The structures are on private land or have not been assessed for ten years. A next step is to develop a prioritization method for fixing passage barriers. The Tribe plans to work with WHSPER.
- The Tribe is working with Kitsap County on a floodplain assessment project that is still in early stages of testing approaches to mapping floodplains. The Tribe is working with Western Washington University on a riparian assessment using lidar, focused on the east Kitsap County.
- The Tribe wants to begin on feasibility and design of a project in the lower Chico watershed with Kitsap County. The Tribe is also working on smaller scale fish passage and stream restoration projects at Gorst Creek with the City of Bremerton and Little Cowling Creek in Miller Bay with Great Peninsula Conservancy.

Wild Fish Conservancy

- Wild Fish Conservancy is thinking about geography with water typing. They have a few projects in Hansville (Finn Creek and Spring Brook fish passage projects). Additional watersheds outside Big Beef Creek are prioritized in the steel head recovery plan for the west sound. Additional water typing field work won't start until early 2026 based on PSR funding. The Wild Fish Conservancy is done with field work for Big Beef Creek. They are now doing QAQC and are moving data from tablets to GIS and connecting photos to points.
 - Brittany Gordon inquired if Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe is comfortable working with the Suquamish Tribe to choose another watershed in the West Sound, since Chico Creek stream typing work has been completed. Alison will provide any gaps and final feedback before moving on. Kitsap County needs to know soon if this is okay to know where to use the remaining portion of funding. Kitsap County has reached out to Hood Canal Coordinating Council did not provide additional suggestion.
 - Marla is okay to proceed on a new project and has an idea (Thomas Creek). Kitsap County and the Tribes will coordinate on the project replacement for water typing.

WCAEF

- WCAEF is planning to submit an abstract proposal (due on 10/25) for a KNRAMP poster presentation at a statewide salmon recovery conference in April 2025. The bid could potentially be connected with how KNRAMP fits into salmon recovery.
- WCAEF as a larger organization is involved in working with Governor candidate Bob Ferguson to make sure salmon is in his campaign and working with the Public Lands & Conservation Office who made a recent major statement on sewage.
- WCAEF is helping lobby the legislature, particularly regarding culvert work and working with Tribal lobbyists, as state agencies are requesting budgets.
- WCAEF is involved in the Riparian Mountain Table meetings.
- The Suquamish and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes usually present at the Puget Sound Recovery Council Meeting. Consider discussing this meeting at a Salmon Recovery Council (SRC) meeting. The SRC meets five times per year and is starting to work on a 2025 schedule.