



Jefferson County Conservation Futures Committee

Monday, April 11, 2011

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Jefferson County Library, Humphrey Room

Port Hadlock, WA

FINAL MINUTES

* **Decisions and action items are indicated in bold font.**

Members Present: Phil Andrus, District 2; Lige Christian, District 3; Richard Jahnke, Interest – Coastal Areas; Jerry Gorsline, District 2; Janet Kearsley, District 1; Phyllis Schultz, Interest - Working Lands; Sarah Spaeth, Interest - Jefferson Land Trust; Fred Weinmann, Interest - Ecology; John Augustus Wood, District 1

Members Absent: Crystie Kisler, Interest - Farming;

County Staff Present: Tami Pokorny, Water Quality Division and Recorder

Guests: J.D. Gallant

I. Call to Order:

Chair Fred Weinmann called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM

II. Review of Agenda:

The agenda was approved, as written.

III. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of March 28, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

IV. Observer comments:

None

V. Old Business:

None

VI. New Business

Linking Rating Worksheet and Application Questions

Janet Kearsley introduced a tool she uses to help rank project applications. It's a table that links the answers to rating worksheet questions to the corresponding questions in the project application (See Appendix A).

Copies of the completed applications for the Winona Basin – Bloedel Project and Carleson Chimacum Creek Acquisition Project were distributed to members who needed them.

The plan for the April 13 site visits and carpool arrangements were discussed. Members will meet at 2PM on April 13 at the intersection of Arizona and Cook Avenues. Those wishing to carpool from Port Townsend should meet in the Environmental Health Department parking lot at 1:45.

Winona Basin – Bloedel Project Presentation

Sarah Spaeth, Executive Director of the Jefferson Land Trust (JLT), made the project presentations summarized below.

The Winona Basin – Bloedel Project is located within the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. The City of Port Townsend will hold title to the proposed acquisition consistent with its Quimper Wildlife Corridor ordinance. The City and JLT have worked together to acquire properties in this area since the mid-1990s. The Corridor is a greenbelt that stretches from McCurdy Point to Fort Worden connecting a series of wetlands in the City's least developed area. Corridor landmarks include a DNR Trustland Transfer property leased to Jefferson County, the Winona Wetland, Chinese Gardens, the Levinski [Quaking Aspen] Wetland and Tibbals Lake. Ms. Spaeth discussed the location of the 100-year floodplain and various properties on the maps contained in the project application.

Ownership in the Quimper Wildlife Corridor is gradually being consolidated under the City. In recent years, the focus has been on the Winona Basin which has some of the best habitat quality in the Corridor according to Dr. Fred Sharpe who identified over 200 bird species in the area. The proposed acquisition consists of seven lots in the Tier 2 category of the Corridor that are adjacent to the 2009 acquisition funded with Conservation Futures. Other sources of funds have been sought to purchase corridor properties, especially the State's Urban Wildlife Habitat Category funds but the Corridor typically doesn't rank well due to the City's relatively small population. Urban population figures are one criteria of the grant program.

JLT has been in conversations with the landowner of the project lots, as well as additional nearby properties, for more than 14 years. She recently expressed a desire to sell, and these seven lots are the current, affordable, priority.

The City located the sewer serving Seaview Estates along the line of lowest elevation including the Winona Wetland area. In 1986, the Army Corps of Engineers recognized that the wetland had been encroached upon. This led to the acquisition of Winona Wetland proper, in part, as mitigation. Winona Wetland held water last in 1997-98. There was concern that maybe the City's sewer line was causing the wetland to drain somehow, but now that the water is back this appears now not to be the case.

The Conservation Futures Ordinance allows the matching contribution to come from lands connected to the project area that were acquired within the previous two years. The donated lands linked to the 2009 Quimper Wildlife Corridor Project are adjacent to the lots currently under consideration. Their appraised value came in higher than expected. Consequently, JLT has requested that this "excess" value be accepted as match for the Winona Basin – Bloedel Project. Much of the project area falls within critical area buffers. However, there is a use exemption which would allow for at least some development.

Numerous species of wildlife use the area including pileated woodpecker, amphibians, bobcat, cougar, and elk. The wetland has mature trees and lots of snags. Ms. Spaeth briefly discussed the spread of barred owls into Western Washington. There are no spotted owl areas in the Corridor. She stressed that the Winona Wetland contains rich habitat for wildlife. Some nearby tree cover

has been lost to development near Arizona Street and a development for 74 new homes on 35 acres is being proposed on the opposite side of Cook Avenue.

The Corridor partners have spent a lot of time trying to piece the properties together despite the large number of landowners in the area. The adoption of the Quimper Wildlife Management Plan has allowed JLT to work in closer partnership with the City. JLT monitors agency-owned properties within the Corridor acquired with CF Funds as well as the lands that JLT owns. There are frequent volunteer activities, clean ups, and noxious weed removal. Tons of trash has been removed. In '98-99 a lot of drug paraphernalia was found. Gates have since been installed to prevent vehicle access, and this has made a huge difference.

There is a lot of community support for the Quimper Wildlife Corridor. The Native Plant Society has done inventory work for JLT and is very supportive; the Audubon Society has hosted educational trips into the Corridor. JLT has trained over 40 Corridor docents who lead monthly trips on the first Saturday of every month. The Corridor was JLT's first proactive project and it's still ongoing. The land trust work only with willing sellers and pays fair market value although some people have donated property to the project.

Phil Andrus asked about the banked land match. Sarah Spaeth responded that land can be used as match for a proposal if that land has been acquired within two years. In 2009, the City acquired some land that ended up being worth much more than anticipated. Only about half of the value was spoken for as match to the 2009 Quimper Wildlife Corridor Project. Lige Christian mentioned that appraised land has been used as match multiple times and this situation isn't all that different. Jerry Gorsline concluded that what is being donated as match is the increased value of the properties over the anticipated value. That increase value took place back in 2009. Staff Tami Pokorny mentioned that the match was asserted when JLT wrote a letter to her in August of 2009 requesting that the increased value be "banked" for future projects. JLT did not want to loose access to the match when they found they couldn't use all of it for the 2009 project. Staff will speak to the county attorney about the eligibility of the land value as match. She requested that Ms. Spaeth read the relevant section of the CF Ordinance (Section 3 (5.)):

The project sponsor will commit to providing a matching contribution no less than the amount of conservation futures funds awarded to the project before conservation futures tax funds are reimbursed to that sponsor. This contribution may consist of:

- i) cash;*
- ii) land trades if the valuation of the land to be traded is established by a valuation arising from an appraisal generated by a Member of the Appraisal Institute (MAI) certified appraiser;*
- iii) the cash value of the land to be traded, excluding Jefferson County conservation futures contributions; or*
- iv) other open spaces acquired within the previous two years that is situated either directly adjacent to or could, in the sole discretion of the county, be directly linked to the property under application.*

Lige Christian expressed that he had no objection to inquiring with the attorney, but he sees the cash value of the land as something that should be used. Janet Kearsley asked whether the letter was seen by the commissioners. Ms. Pokorny responded that the request was documented in the invoice for the 2009 Quimper Wildlife Project. Ms. Kearsley suggested that the JLT letter be included in the commissioners' packet when they are asked to decide funding. Members agreed it was a good that JLT had thought to write a letter at the time.

The total project budget has to include the land that is being acquired plus the value of the match. The land that is being used as match is shown in the application on page 15 in the corner – the light colored parcels. Ms. Spaeth suggested that the application be improved to make the details on match and O & M more clear. In Question #11, total estimated acquisition cost, it's not clear whether that figure should include O & M or not. Janet Kearsley requested that the match properties be made more visible on black and white map copies.

Sarah Spaeth clarified that no CF funds were used to acquire the match property, the Block 18 lots. These were gifted to the City of Port Townsend in 2009 and exceeded the anticipated value of the land by \$49,000 at the time of the gift. About half of the value was applied as match to the 2009 Quimper Wildlife Corridor Project. Only the excess value is being applied to the current application. Phyllis Schultz confirmed that the lots were in the vicinity of the new application. Ms. Spaeth said that since the proposed match is only good for two years, any "unspent" banked match remaining after the current project would not be utilized. This was another factor in JLT's decision to apply this year for this property.

Chair Weinmann reminded the Committee that there will be another chance to ask questions in the field during the site visits. Lige Christian mentioned that no new information should be brought up at the ranking meeting but that there would be a full discussion of the projects otherwise.

Carleson Chimacum Creek Acquisition Project Presentation

Ms. Spaeth then began the Carleson Chimacum Creek Project presentation. The owner of this project area contacted JLT to ask about selling the 5-acre property fee simple or a conservation easement. The property is located on the lower main stem of Chimacum Creek which includes critical summer chum spawning habitat. The property would be held by JLT with a deed of right to the State or by Jefferson County.

The summer chum runs declined in 1980s due to a number of factors including habitat degradation and culvert failures and the species was completely extirpated. Because the runs were Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed, grant funds became available to acquire and restore habitat. On Chimacum Creek, a washout had caused a tremendous amount of fine sediment to be deposited in the creek bed and it essentially cemented over the spawning gravels. The North Olympic Salmon Coalition (NOSC), the Jefferson Conservation District and others worked to break up the deposited sediment and free up the spawning areas. Property began to be acquired and a partnership developed involving WDFW, Tribes, WSU, NOSC, JLT which became the "Chumsortium." The group shared project ideas and developed a strategy to recover the stream.

The project area is a key piece of the "S-Curve" area near Irondale with Chimacum Creek running through the middle. It is one of the last properties of the lower mainstem that isn't already protected. In addition to summer chum salmon, it contains habitat for fall chum, coho, steelhead, and cutthroat. The property slopes down to the floodplain of the creek on both sides and contains mature forest canopy. The landowner has developed a covered picnic platform and there's also a utility shed. A developed ATV trail leads down to the creek and provides access for recreation and noxious weed removal. The owner has removed a large area of Himalayan blackberries.

The property is beautiful one with signs of pileated woodpecker, snags, and a variety of instream habitat including pools. It is assessed at \$70,000 and the appraised value is estimated to be \$150,000. JLT is applying to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) for the majority of the funding. If approved, conservation futures funds would supply the required 15% match. JLT would also contribute some cash towards stewardship costs.

The Chumsortium has a management plan for the Lower Chimacum area. Ms. Spaeth said that JLT would work with Chumsortium partners on restoration and in lining up volunteer assistance. There

are remaining invasive species issues to address and in the past there were also signs of inappropriate uses by local kids. A Friends of Chimacum Beach group formed recently when the county didn't have funds to maintain it. This group would also likely be available to help with upstream areas. The Chumsortium partners have been able to take a good step forward with some of the issues that seem particularly magnified in this part of Irondale. There was a brief discussion on the topic of illegal dumping.

Chair Weinmann mentioned that the CF program allows sponsors three years to identify matching funds. Phyllis Schultz said that CF funds are often the first dollars towards completion of a project. Lige Christian felt that the leveraging of County dollars in the CF program made this a good use of local tax revenue.

VII. Other/ Administrative

Steps to Next Meeting – Ms. Pokorny discussed options for submitting ratings sheets ahead of the May 2 meeting. Completed sheets should ideally be sent to staff electronically or in hard copy (to Environmental Health) by April 28 or 29.

Committee Membership – Ms. Pokorny regretted that she did not inform Crystie Kisler or Phil Andrus of their term expiration dates in a timely manner. J.D. Gallant will be interviewed by Chair Weinmann and staff on April 15, and could be appointed to the Committee in time to rank projects.

Fund Balance – The Fund balance as of March 31, 2011 was \$403,200.10.

VIII. Observer Comments

None

IX. Adjournment

Chair Weinmann adjourned the meeting at 7:46 PM.

APPENDIX A

Ranking Questions/Application Answers

Ranking Questions	Application Answer
1	12 b
2	13
3	14/15
4	16
5	17
6	19
7	20
8	22
9	25
10	26
11	27
12	28