



**Technical Advisory Group Meeting #6
Meeting Report**

**May 17th, 2017
Puyallup Library**

The sixth meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the Farming in the Floodplain Project (FFP) was held on May 17th, 2017 at the Puyallup Library. Approximately 25 people participated, including Clear Creek area farmers and residents, Pierce County staff, Farming in the Floodplain Project staff, and regional technical experts. PCC Farmland Trust and ESA, the technical contractors working on the project, led the meeting.

Topics included a the Final Drainage Inventory Memo, Tide Gates Memo, Case Studies, Farmland Impact Memo and the Phase 3 Workplan for the Farming in the Floodplain Project.

Final Drainage Inventory Memo

Spencer Easton of ESA presented findings and recommendations from the Final Drainage Inventory Memo. The Memo highlights that relying on Clear Creek for drainage is a major constraint on the system and that ditch maintenance is needed across the system. One recommendation is to open a separate outlet to the Puyallup River for agricultural drainage. This would allow all drainage ditches to be regulated as non-fish bearing, and flow from Clear Creek's tributaries would not enter the drainage system. This could be a benefit to both agricultural drainage as well as fish.

Questions and comments included:

- Much of the discussion on this Memo focused on the suggestion to create a separate outlet for drainage into the Puyallup River. There was a question regarding the conjunctive use of groundwater and surface flow. There was also concern regarding feasibility of rerouting drainage system due to regulation and permitting that would be involved. The Puyallup Tribe's efforts to diminish pollutant loads and EPA permitting requirements may be prohibitive to rerouting and creating a new outlet. However, there could be so much change coming to the area that could offer opportunity for incorporating this as part of a long-term solution.
- There was a brief discussion of the need to include any plans to expand the railroad in long-term planning for drainage. As the FFP enters the next round of the grant, these big issues (including re-routing Clear Creek) could be considered as part of a task related to agricultural drainage.
- Who would be responsible for long-term maintenance of drainage district? DD10 should be responsible for maintenance, however, potentially in partnership on bigger activities.

Tide Gates Memo

Spencer Easton and Eleanor Bartolomeo presented on the Tide Gates on Clear Creek, their current function, and potential actions and modifications. There are two tide gates at the outlet of Clear Creek into the Puyallup River. One is a newer metal slide gate owned by the Port of Tacoma, and one is an older, wooden flap gate with no known responsible party. Eleanor explained the operation and triggers of both gates as well as the findings based on data from existing gauges installed on either side of the culverts/gates of the current conditions of the tide gates. The memo focuses on interim actions that could be undertaken prior to the planned removal of the tide gates as part of the FBD plan. Potential actions include multiple options for modifying operations of either gate, adding orifices to the tide gates to improve fish passage, or replacing the flap gate if plans for removal change.

Questions and comments included:

- The presentation mentioned a problem with the slide gate this winter that left it stuck partially open; how quickly was the problem identified and fixed? The issue was identified quickly but replacement parts needed to be special ordered and took some time to be repaired.
- There was interest in DD10 meeting with Port of Tacoma staff to discuss potential coordination of effort.
- Jenn Stebbings of Port of Tacoma is looking into the discrepancy between consent decree level and current operations. She stated that the Port of Tacoma performed preventative maintenance on the slide gate monthly. (DD10 would be interested in participating in a monthly gate check.)
- Do we know the flow rates on the culverts? There are not currently gages in place to measure flow.
- There was discussion around the potential effectiveness of fish orifices, their purpose, and whether they have been successful elsewhere.
- TAG members discussed future responsibility for and ownership of the flap gate and the risks of taking on its long-term responsibility. This decision is at a policy level within the County, and would need the Flood Zone Control District (County Council is their board) to prioritize addressing the flap gate. There were questions around whether it would be the flood control district's responsibility.
- What is the cost-benefit analysis of improving or replacing the gates versus the emergency costs of rescue during flood event? Even though costly, it may make sense to put money towards tide gates if compared to cost of emergency rescue.

Case Studies Update

Natali Terreri of PCC Farmland Trust briefly presented examples found in researching case studies of projects that have incorporated agriculture into multi-benefit flood control projects. In preparation for the alternatives analysis that will accompany the future master planning process, the FFP is looking into projects with similarities to the Clear Creek Floodplain Reconnection Project that offer examples of ways that other projects have incorporated agriculture and landowner interests into the design of projects. Natali presented on four case studies from around the world that incorporated Farm, Fish, and Flood.

- Room for the River, Netherlands

- Yolo Basin, Sacramento CA
- Farming Floodplains for the Future, United Kingdom
- Southern Flow Corridor, Tillamook WA

TAG members requested more information on how farmer's needs were incorporated into the Southern Flow project. There was also an interest in tools and techniques useful to the master planning process and multi-benefit integration, particularly around stakeholder involvement

Farmland Impact Memo

Spencer Easton presented preliminary information on the Farmland Impact Memo. The memo is intended to inform the master planning process and poses 18 questions around impacts. The final draft of this memo will be available in July 2017.

Workplan Phase 2018-2019

There are six potential tasks for the next phase of work. Tasks include a feasibility study of separating agricultural drainage from clear creek, assessing tide gates and conduct a feasibility study of modifications, an agricultural community resilience plan, and a countywide drainage workshop. Additional tasks include 4 TAG meetings and planting project monitoring.

TAG members expressed support for all of the potential tasks and hoped that all of the tasks can be pursued in the next phase. Some TAG members asked what the process would be for deciding what tasks would and wouldn't be funded given that future funding likely wouldn't be able to support all the tasks. There is a hope that there will be opportunities for additional funding and that other partners in the IMG will find common ground on some tasks. Several TAG members expressed that the amount of work already produced by the Farming in the Floodplain Project with funding available has been impressive and shows the possibility for what can be accomplished with future funding.