



# FLOODPLAINS FOR THE FUTURE

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PUYALLUP, WHITE & CARBON RIVERS

August 29, 2015

The attached *Existing Conditions Report* (ECR) is the first milestone of the Farming in the Floodplain Project ([www.farminginthefloodplain.org](http://www.farminginthefloodplain.org)), which is focused on increasing the understanding of agricultural viability and analyzing the impacts of proposed changes to flood and hydrology systems on farmlands (and farm businesses/farmers) in the Clear Creek area in the Puyallup River Basin.

The Clear Creek Project is one of several floodplain reconnection projects being advanced by Floodplains for the Future (FFTF), a public-private partnership supported by the Floodplains by Design Initiative. FFTF is focused on recovering floodplain functions and salmon habitat while protecting the health and safety of communities in the Puyallup, White, & Carbon Rivers. Partners include Pierce County, the Puyallup and Muckleshoot Tribes, the Department of Ecology, cities, non-profit organizations (including PCC Farmland Trust and Forterra), community groups, and technical experts from across the region and state.

The ECR accomplishes two important goals. First, it provides an independent and farmer-focused account of what agricultural viability means to a defined farming community, the Clear Creek-Riverside neighborhood of the lower Puyallup River. Second, it takes an important step toward successfully integrating agricultural interests into FFTF's ongoing efforts to reconnect over 1,200 acres of floodplain in the Puyallup Watershed.

Integrating agricultural viability into this work is a complex but worthy task. The depth of information provided by the ECR demonstrates the level of effort needed to understand how local communities may be affected by floodplain projects, while also providing a basis for incorporating community needs into project planning and design. Moving forward, the ECR is informing the second phase of the Farming in the Floodplain Project. This work will explore specific risk factors in depth in order to inform recommendations for addressing both risks and benefits to agricultural viability in the context of the larger reconnection project.

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