



Agricultural Resilience Action Plan FAQ

The Farming in the Floodplain Project (FFP) is interested in developing an Agricultural Resilience Action Plan (ARAP) as part of its current work plan. The FFP is part of the Floodplains for the Future (FFTF) program and is led by the Washington State University (WSU) Extension. While the ARAP would be specific to the Clear Creek area, the FFP will also be conducting work at the watershed-scale that could eventually lead to a Puyallup Watershed ARAP. If developed, the Clear Creek ARAP will be guided by the FFTF Farm Committee, which includes representatives of the WSU Extension, PCC Farmland Trust, Forterra, the Pierce Conservation District, and Pierce County.

The FFP will only advance the ARAP if there is substantive interest from the agricultural community. Initial conversations with farmers in the Clear Creek area suggest that there is community interest.

This FAQ is meant to provide initial information about the Clear Creek ARAP and the FFP work at the Puyallup Watershed-scale.

What is an Agricultural Resilience Action Plan?

An Agricultural Resilience Action Plan is envisioned as a document that would identify a suite of actions that could be pursued to address physical conditions and increase agricultural viability and enhance the resilience of the agricultural community as conditions change.

How can agricultural resilience be enhanced?

The Food and Agriculture Organization states that agricultural resilience can be enhanced by:

- Reducing exposure to risks
- Reducing sensitivity to risks
- Increasing adaptive capacity

Examples of risks to agriculture include flooding, poor drainage, and sedimentation in ditches and streams.

How will the Agricultural Resilience Action Plans relate to the previous work of the FFP?

Work-to-date for the FFP has largely been focused on increasing the understanding of and documenting existing conditions that pose risks to agricultural viability in the Clear Creek area of the Puyallup Watershed. The proposed Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan would build off that work by putting that information into a resilience framework and by developing and documenting actions that could be undertaken to reduce exposure and sensitivity to those risks.

At the same time, the FFP will work to understand current and future physical conditions that affect agricultural viability at the Puyallup Watershed-scale. Depending on the outcome of that work and community interest, it could eventually lead to development of an Agricultural Resilience Action Plan for the entire watershed.

Have other areas developed Agricultural Resilience Action Plans?

The Snohomish Conservation District is currently developing an Agricultural Resilience Plan for Snohomish County. A large body of work on agricultural adaptation planning has been developed in British Columbia. Environmental Science Associates (ESA), the technical consultant to the FFP, is researching other examples of agricultural resilience planning.

What would the Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan do?

The Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan will use existing information (from the previous round of the FFP and other sources) and a community engagement process to identify and document a range of actions that could be undertaken to increase agricultural resilience in the Clear Creek area. The Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan would not include new technical studies or climate projections. Because it would be developed with Floodplains by Design grant funding, the plan would largely focus on physical conditions that affect agricultural viability (such as flooding and drainage), but community- or economic-based actions (such as developing a farming co-op for the area) could be included as actions that increase adaptive capacity.

What Puyallup Watershed-scale work with the FFP pursue?

Over the next two years, the FFP will develop an Existing Conditions Report for agricultural viability at the watershed-scale and will complete technical studies to increase the understanding of current and expected future conditions. Over the second half of 2019, we will conduct a gap analysis of information available at the watershed scale and conduct outreach to farmers in order to determine what technical studies would be most helpful. While the focus of the work will be on physical conditions (such as flooding, drainage, land use, groundwater, and climate change), the Existing Conditions Report will also consider other issues that affect agricultural viability (such as markets, regulations, and labor).

After initial watershed-scale studies and the Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan are completed, the FFP may determine that it is appropriate to pursue a Puyallup Watershed Agricultural Resilience Action Plan, building off the findings of the technical work.

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