



**Technical Advisory Group Meeting
December 10, 2019
Meeting Notes**

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the Farming in the Floodplain Project (FFP) was held on December 10, 2019 at the Puyallup Library. About 25 people participated, including Clear Creek area farmers and residents, a Drainage District 10 commissioner, Pierce County staff, Farming in the Floodplain Project staff, and regional experts. The meeting was led by ESA, the technical contractors working on the project.

Topics discussed at the meeting included ESA's scope of work and timeline over the next two years and the Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Plan. Discussions at the meeting are summarized below.

Work Plan

Spencer Easton from ESA presented on ESA's work plan for 2019-2021, which includes five tasks:

- Project management and coordination, including participating in Floodplains for the Future (FFTF) Integrated Management Group and Farm Committee meetings,
- Development of a Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Action Plan, including participating in community meetings and conducting a literature review on agricultural resilience,
- Conducting a gaps analysis for information on the physical conditions that affect agriculture, both now and into the future, in the Puyallup Watershed,
- Conducting three to four TAG meetings, and
- Writing a Climate Change and Agriculture Memorandum to leverage climate information developed for FFTF.

Questions and comments on the work plan from the TAG included:

- What topics will the gap analysis focus on? It will look at the physical conditions that effect agriculture, such as drainage, flooding, groundwater levels, and soils.
- What is the timing for the Clear Creek Agriculture Resilience Plan and the Puyallup Watershed gap analysis? They are occurring concurrently. The gap analysis work has already been completed for the Clear Creek area in the past phase of the FFP.
- Will there be a spatial analysis in the gap analysis? Yes, there will be a DTG meeting to look at spatial information about pressures on agriculture in the Puyallup Watershed.

- How will the literature review will be synthesized and presented? The literature review is focused on research question regarding climate, agricultural resilience, and development pressures. The review will culminate in an annotated bibliography and a summary document.
- What is the funding source for this work plan? It is the Floodplains by Design grant from the 2017-2019 biennium.

Clear Creek Agriculture Resilience Plan (ARAP)

Spencer Easton presented on the approach and process for the Clear Creek Agricultural Resilience Plan. An Agricultural Resilience Action Plan (ARAP) is a document that will identify a suite of actions that can be pursued to address physical conditions and increase agricultural viability to enhance the resilience of the agricultural community as conditions change. The Snohomish Conservation District recently completed an Agriculture Resilience Plan for Snohomish County, which is available online at <https://snohomishcd.org/ag-resilience>.

TAG questions and comments included:

- Who will take responsibility for actions within the plan? Some actions could be funded with Floodplains by Design funding or other grant sources, or as mitigation for agricultural impacts of other projects. Some other projects could be implemented by individual farmers if they choose to do so.
- The plan could be a great resource to advocate for funding from the legislature.
- The project area for the plan includes a portion of the Clarks Creek basin as well. The plan process will need to consider the Clarks Creek TMDL and the water quality issues associate with that Creek. This will pose new challenges and new opportunities for collaboration.

ESA presented the proposed process for engaging Clear Creek farmers and others in development of the plan. The process includes TAG meetings, community meetings, and farm visits. TAG members suggested direct outreach to farmers before community meetings are held in order to identify key issues and to inform the meeting agendas. A TAG member asked whether residential landowners in the area will be engaged as well. The plan outreach will focus on farmers, but residential landowners will be welcome to attend community meetings if they would like to. TAG members suggested coordinating with the Clear Creek Strategy Plan and with other projects in the area to avoid meeting fatigue.

ESA presented a list of key factors that will make conditions in the Clear Creek area change, including the Clear Creek Strategy Plan and Floodplain Reconnection Project, the BNSF Railway Expansion, the Canyon Road Extension, climate change, and development. ESA also presented other potential risks to agricultural viability in the area, including flooding, groundwater levels and saltwater intrusion, sediment, poor drainage, water availability, aging agricultural infrastructure, and new infrastructure projects. TAG members provided input on this list, including:

- Zoning changes
- Drought

- Various components of flood risk (i.e. flooding from the Puyallup River, flooding from Clear Creek, etc.)
- Invasive vegetation
- Soil compaction

Action Brainstorm

The TAG brainstormed actions that could potentially be included in the plan, including:

- Water breaks
- Integrative pest management
- Separating agricultural drainage
- Develop a map of existing ag drainage tile
- Noxious weed removal, particularly Reed canary grass and Elodia removal in Clarks Creek
- Shading for vegetation
- Roadway ditch maintenance
- Creating a pervious road network (the City of Puyallup is undertaking this)
- Provide legal assistance for Drainage District 10
- Create salmon habitat in low lying areas in a way that would also support drainage.
- Farm pads
- Innovative zoning, similar to the Snohomish County density fringe flood designation
- Create a better phone tree
- Offer supplemental flood insurance
- Water storage and cisterns
- Off channel reservoirs
- Water quality treatment similar to that used for the I-5 Puyallup Bridge Expansion (tertiary treatment with a settling pond for solids, wetland filters, and sand filters)