



Date: September 11, 2006
To: Habitat Advisory Group (HAG)
From: Tom Martin
Subject: HAG Meeting Summary for May 19, 2006- 10:00 AM

Attendees:

Members attending:		
Dennis Hadaller, Lewis County	Bart Madison, Conservation Groups	Tom Martin, Tacoma Power
Hal Beecher, WDFW	Brian Peck, USFWS	
Others attending:		
Mark LaRiviere, Tacoma Power	Larry Unzelman, Lewis County	Larry Keeton, Lewis County
Members absent:		
None		

Summary

The Habitat Advisory Group (HAG) meeting was held at the USFWS office in Lacey, Washington.

The meeting summary from the January 18, 2006 meeting was approved by the HAG.

Tom reviewed the status of the purchase of the two properties at Massey Bar- the Worden and Berlin Trust properties. He passed around the draft purchase offers based on the appraisal that was done pursuant to this purchase. He noted the offers were below the asking price, but not by a large amount. The reason for the lower appraisals was the timber value. The offers are for \$214,000 for the Worden property (\$240,000 asking price) and \$38,000 for the Berlin Trust property (\$40,000 asking price). Tom said that these would be sent out the following week. Larry thought there would be a response from the owners within a couple of weeks. Dennis asked if the status of the DNR property at the down-river end of the properties had been ascertained. Tom responded that it had and he thought it was protected, but would confirm that. Tom then discussed the Puget Sound Energy wells that were on the Worden property and how they were connected to the Jackson Prairie Natural Gas Storage Project. He said that these wells would not impact fish habitat.

Larry Unzelman said that there are three additional parcels for sale at Massey Bar that he found through the MLS system. He described the properties. These are the Jackson Highway LLC

property, the Truth Alternative Ministries and the Merle Jenkins properties. It was agreed to have him pursue these further. The Wasser-Winters property at Massey Bar was also discussed. Dennis noted that Dick Winters was having some health problem and suggested that Larry contact Ron Berg of the Wasser – Winters Company.

Larry Unzelman discussed the Lacamas and Otter Creeks properties. He said that he has not spent much time on this. He has talked to one of the owners via phone and sent letters to others, but has not had a positive response from any of them.

Larry brought the group up to date on the use of the subscription to the Multiple Listing Service that was authorized at the last meeting. He said that after purchasing the subscription, they had to take a class in its use. He handed out a screen shot of the search input page. He then handed out copies of property listings found using the MLS search feature along with maps of those listings and proceeded to review them. Not all of them were in the initial target areas, but Mark agreed that some of them were worth checking out.

Bart stated that when properties with desirable habitat are found, but have homes on them, the owners should be approached about a conservation easement. The fact that Lewis County doesn't have a public benefit rating system that gives a property owner credit for easements was noted. Tom noted that there are studies that show properties with buffers (i.e., conservation easements) have higher value than similar properties without the buffer.

Tom then started to discuss the Pratt property across from Timber Trails. Dennis recused himself and left the room. Tom explained that Dennis and a partner had just purchased the property. Tom gave a little background and explained that he had confirmed Dennis' ownership during a phone conversation. He said that the new owners, Hadaller Smith, LLC, were logging the site and planned to develop ten 20 acre homes sites on the property and that he was interested in arranging a conservation easement from the bluff to the river's edge. Because of the MOU with Lewis County to assist Tacoma Power with property purchase, he could not do so until he was out of office at the end of this year. Mark confirmed that this shoreline was prime spawning habitat, some of the best on the river and that is sensitive to people and boats. It was agreed to pursue the easement next year. Hal said that a site visit would be needed to determine just where the bluff, and hence the potential conservation easement boundary, was located. Dennis rejoined the meeting after this discussion ended.

Tom updated the group on the status of gravel augmentation. The plan is to mine gravel this summer, place it on the bank below Barrier Dam and to push it into the river at the appropriate time next spring.

Mark explained that the first batch of large woody debris placed adjacent to the trout hatchery was swept away by the river and that another batch will be placed there this summer. Mark explained how the wood is staged a various elevations so that all of it would not be swept away at once. In response to a question about monitoring from Brian, Mark explained that a baseline survey was completed last year and that this will be repeated at a specified time in the future.

Under new business, Dennis said that he will be leaving the HAG at the end of his term as commissioner which is December 31st of this year. He said he thought the person elected to fill his position, Commissioner for the 3rd District, would be selected for the HAG.

Action Items

Tom then reviewed that action items or tasks from this meeting. They are:

Contact Ron Berg of the Wasser – Winters Company about the property at Massey Bar – Larry Unzelman.

Evaluate aerial photos to determine whether or not the Jackson Highway LLC property merits further evaluation – Mark

Contact owners of Truth Alternative Ministries and Merle Jenkins properties at Massey Bar about selling their properties – Larry U.

Check on status on DNR property at the west end of the Worden property – Tom

Find out more from Debbie Young about studies showing that properties with buffers are worth more than those without – Tom

Report back with details on the properties along the river for sale that were presented at this meeting – Larry U.

Prepare a spreadsheet for the HAG members listing all the properties that are being purchased, investigated, etc., with pertinent information on each property – Larry U.

Put up sign and make an announcement about the gravel that will be stockpiled below Barrier Dam for the gravel augmentation program – Tom

Review gravel “feeder” bluffs and sites in the targeted properties along the lower Cowlitz River – Mark

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for September 8, 2006 at 10:00 AM at USFWS Office in Lacey.

cc: P. McCarty
D. Young
M. LaRiviere
Ted Lyons
Larry Keeton
Larry Unzelman