

Toward a Natural Asset Management Plan for Kitsap County

KNRAMP Workshop Summary

Date: 04/12/24

Attendees: Steve Todd (Suquamish Tribe), Alison O’Sullivan (Suquamish Tribe) Marla Powers (Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe), Brittany Gordon (Kitsap County), Doug Adams (Kitsap County), Adam Brown (Kitsap County), Irene Weber (Kitsap County), Jim Rogers (Kitsap County), Jonathan Raine (Kitsap County), Mindy Roberts (WA Conservation Action Education Fund), Robinson Low (WA Conservation Action Education Fund), Elizabeth McManus (Ross Strategic), Dana Stefan (Ross Strategic), Casey Hart (Ross Strategic).

Next Steps

- Ross and WCAEF will schedule follow-up conversations with the Tribal staff and will discuss further logistics for a site visit.
- WCAEF will engage the Core Team members to refine the matrix (subcategories, related actions, etc.) and potential actions.
- Ross will engage the Core Team members to refine the draft KNRAMP County-Wide Decision-Making Framework.

Introduction

Ross Strategic welcomed the Core Team, reviewed the agenda items and the 2024 major milestones (see milestone slide). Mindy Roberts highlighted that two memos will be developed in the second half of 2024 to describe implementation and its progress in the pilot watersheds, i.e., a pilot implementation memo with priority management actions (due in July after the June Core Team workshop) and a pilot implementation report (due in December).

Updated Attributes

Robinson Low reviewed the three updated attributes (fish passage barriers, BIBI, and water quality for shorelines) that now incorporate the feedback shared by the Core Team in the past few workshops. Core Team members were asked if the updated attributes are good to be used in the development of the County-wide LOS maps, including pilot work between now and June. Input from the Core Team is captured below.

BIBI:

Robinson Low shared that the updated BIBI attribute includes taking an average score for the last five samples at each station no more than ten years prior, assigning management units (MUs) for all sampling stations downstream, and doing the natural breaks in stream connection by hand.

Core Team members responded:

- Core Team members supported moving forward with this updated attribute.
- Members were wondering if averaging specific sites with outlying data will cause data loss, making it more difficult to identify areas that warrant more attention. Mindy Roberts responded that the data won’t be discarded in averaging. Averaging data will help determine the overall current Level of Service (LOS) to allow for county-wide adaptive management.

Shellfish Growing Area

Robinson Low described an overarching rule that if a classification is less than 10% of the total MU area, the classification for that MU will be void/null. Core Team members responded:

- Core Team members supported moving forward with this updated attribute.
- Members advised to be careful not to lose information in averaging data, maintain the ability to see maps and more details as desired, and ensure overall clarity and transparency in the maps.

Fish Passage Barriers

Robinson Low described the updated fish passage barrier scoring based on the barrier’s presence as follows:

Attribute	Indicator	Condition Rating				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
S4. Fish Passage	Barrier’s present	5+ (Presence of 0% passable)	3-4 (presence of 0% passable)	1-2 (No 0% passable)	0 (with 100% passable)	0 (No 100% passable)

Core Team members responded:

- Core Team members are okay to proceed with the fish passage attributes and agreed that, as work progresses, it can be further refined if needed. The team suggested to maintain flexibility for fish passage and further assess how to address the attribute for specific projects during implementation.
- One suggestion discussed was to separate the 33% and 67% barriers for ease of prioritization. Members noted that combining 100% passable and no-barriers as a category makes more sense than combining the 33% and 67%; there are many barriers that it could take a long time to work on 100% passable and no-barrier projects.
- In response to the team’s input, Mindy Roberts noted that, currently, characterization of current LOS and several sections of Chico Creek will end up with low LOS. There still needs to be more thought on tactics in addressing fish passage barrier scoring but this can be revisited later. The current method could be tried out for the pilot watersheds recognizing there may be issues. Methods can be reworked before they are implemented at a County-wide level.

Priority Actions in the Pilot Watersheds

Robinson Low presented a matrix with potential actions in the pilot watersheds based on the actions suggested by the Core Team at the February workshop. The goal was to gather initial feedback on the matrix and organize the pilot watershed actions to guide further selection and evaluation by the Core Team. Discussion also focused on the following question: given the County’s limited resources, how do we improve LOS where it is low and protect LOS where it is high? What do we do first?

Core Team members shared the following suggestions and input related to both specific actions and overall implementation:

- **Collaboration across multiple partners:**

- The County and partners need to be engaged collaboratively in the priority list in order to ensure that it is helpful and gather expertise.
- It is important to work with people who know and care about the sub-watersheds and understand what is needed to create lists of actions.
- Consider potential partners that could help advance or are already working on efforts related to the identified actions (e.g. Tribes, salmon recovery efforts, conservation districts).
- **Organization of potential actions:**
 - Tactical steps will be required to implement projects.
 - There are multiple ways to organize the actions (e.g. protection and regulatory actions could be under a restoration umbrella; there could be actions under community voluntary and social change action categories, etc.).
- **Urban restoration:** The following illustrative example was offered: for urban tree regulations, if a property is to be cleared for development, two trees must be kept intact, or four trees must be planted. There are no further requirements to plant more trees for development.
- **Shoreline armoring:**
 - If the Shore Friendly Program were to be expanded, it could have a significant impact compared to projects broken into individual pieces. Targeted outreach and incentives could help address coordinated sections of shoreline armoring for large scale action. It may be easier to do this in the lower reach of Chico Creek. Consider long term challenges, maintenance, and funding.
 - Restoration is a broad category with more specific riparian actions. Shore-friendly actions are parallel to riparian floodplain restoration. Initial outreach with landowners may lead to acquiring conservation easements. Conservation easements could be another strategy to add into the matrix.
 - Expanding Shore Friendly Programs could entail finding neighborhoods with enough distance to do shoreline armoring removal, acknowledging that in some cases this may require property acquisition. Members noted that a lot of “low-hanging-fruit” work is already done.
 - Potential actions for shoreline armoring would be to shape armor removal projects for Big Beef in the estuary. Chico Creek has a bridge construction.
 - Consider programmatic approaches, e.g., align KNRAMP actions with existing programs that have similar goals such as Kitsap County’s Shore Friendly program, where funding is expanding.
- **Regulations:**
 - Regulatory and voluntary mechanisms each have strong roles in reaching DLOS. Members noted that regulations should be used strategically and in a balanced way; too many regulations or incentives only may not accomplish as much as they intend.

Action: WCAEF will engage the Core Team members after the workshop to refine the matrix (subcategories, related actions, etc.) and potential actions.

Prioritization Framework

Ross Strategic reviewed a draft County-Wide Decision-Making Framework. Mindy Roberts added that the pilot watersheds will help inform how to generalize the prioritization process at a County-wide level. In response to a suggested approach from the Framework, members agreed that the Core Team can serve as an advisory group to the KNRAMP decision-making process.

Workgroup members shared the following input:

- A priority list decision-making process can be conducted annually. The Department of Community Development (DCD) can lead the process. A more detailed report should be done every five years.
- Identify where actions are already taking place to identify opportunities for collaboration.
- KNRAMP is mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan update but not with specific details. One suggestion from members was that, in the future, maps and prioritized action lists could be included with the Comprehensive Plan update. Actions will be considered, especially for different mitigation options.
- **Prioritization compared to other department plans:** Various departments (such as the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) or the Parks Recreation and Open Space program) will visit sites annually and develop lists of projects to sort into different categories (e.g. restoration, protection, regulatory, acquisitions, conservation easements, etc.).
 - To create a balanced approach in identifying both restoration and protection activities and ensure they are not in competition with each other, the Core Team recommended to use the KNRAMP decision-making process for each category separately and create two separate lists of potential actions. Priority actions could be chosen based on available funding and partners. Priorities may be different for different areas and may adapt over time based on needs.
 - KNRAMP could be leveraged by the Capital Improvement Program and TIP. It was suggested to include visuals of areas to work on as part of the KNRAMP County-wide reports, to facilitate use by other county departments as part of their planning processes.
- **Kitsap County department timelines to be aware of:**
 - Parks: Late winter/early spring would work best for helping with prioritization. Planning processes and data analysis are done in the winter. Restoration actions are performed in the summer and fall.
 - Stormwater: Some actions could be taken through the stormwater program. Doug Adams plans to discuss how the department sees their process fitting into this but does not have current insights.
 - Transportation: The KNRAMP list would help inform the prioritized TIP in late spring/early summer. It is ideal to lay out priorities by the end of the summer. Some KNRAMP roads projects could potentially be added to the TIP.

Core Team Updates

Kitsap County Update:

- The County is working on the Comprehensive Plan update and has received a lot of comments. The Comprehensive Plan has a lot of goals and policies pushing KNRAMP forward including multiple places to ensure KNRAMP is implemented and used in transportation, stormwater, and other processes.
- The County is working on a salmon recovery chapter update and a four-year West Sount Partners for Ecosystem Recovery (WSPER) plan update.
- A local Heritage advocacy group is advocating that the County reconvey or ask DNR to manage lands differently to preserve forests to preserve globally rare (but locally common) ecosystems. This overlaps with the KNRAMP pilot projects. KNRAMP can be used to identify conservation priorities for DNR land management. This is a commissioner driven project.
- The Department of Commerce presented a quarter-to-half million-dollar grant opportunity. Tribes and local government are eligible for the opportunity. Kitsap County may be positioned to receive funding that could help tree canopy implementation.

Suquamish Tribe Update:

- KNRAMP has many intersections with other work, such as a current salmon strategy recovery update. It is important to be aware of synergistic efforts and where KNRAMP could collaborate and make strong connections.
- The Tribe and others are busy trying to assess fish passage barriers. They are working on prioritization and will be able to share more in the coming months.
- The Tribe is involved in the Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan and Critical Ordinance update to ensure work is protected in the future. They are also active in following six PPD process with the state WSDOT and ECY. They are also participating in a policy group and are working on various clean up processes and completing an SSR3 Chico Bridge update.

Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe Update:

- Marla received HAZWOPER training.
- The Tribe has been working with Kitsap County on the Comprehensive Plan and Critical Ordinance update. They also worked with Jefferson County on the Comprehensive Plan process.
- The Tribe is on the verge of receiving an official notice from NOAA on a sizable Hood Canal bridge project with Long Live the Kings. Work will begin in several months.

2024 Milestones and Next Steps

The Next Core Team workshop is planned for June and will focus on the draft Pilot Implementation Memo, as well as review updates to the Framework and Matrix. Ross and WCAEF will schedule follow-up conversations with the Tribes and will discuss further logistics for a potential site visit.