

Lower White River
Biodiversity Management Area
Stewardship Planning Meeting
November 8, 2006

Auburn High School
800 4th St. NE
Auburn, WA 98002

Present: Michelle Tirhi – Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Karen Dvornich – UW NatureMapping Program
Gretchen Muller – National Wildlife Federation (Backyard Sanctuary Program)
Aaron Nix – City of Auburn
Paula Wiech – City of Pacific
Cindy James – Department of Ecology
Linda Burgess – Puyallup River Watershed Council
Jeanne Fancher – citizen of Pacific
Mark – National Wildlife Federation Board Member
Tracy Engels – LWR BMA Conservation Coordinator

Presentation was a slide show by Michelle Tirhi and Karen Dvornich explained the bioblitz that was held on the LWR in June and the results from that survey. They also explained the beginnings of the process, the formation of the Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance and the idea behind the bioblitz (protection of biodiversity in the LWR BMA).

The Crescent Valley plan is very small, very doable. The group started with a mission statement, a statement of how they formed, the bioblitz held in their areas and then the transcripts from their community meetings. They identified stresses and threats to the conservation targets they identified. Then they formed goals and subgoals and discussed how to reach those goals. This led to an action plan with 4 actions leading to goals they wanted to accomplish.

The LWR has been shown to have a great deal of biodiversity and the various organizations are here to help the citizenship put together a stewardship plan that will not be legislatively driven but could be alongside Pierce County's open space plan. Landowners will need to decide what is most important to them of the various factors affecting their landscape and then decide what needs to be done to fix those problems.

We spoke about flooding and that there is presently a lot of silt in the rivers and that the retention ponds appear to be inadequate. Also, the representatives from Auburn and Pacific spoke about the present state of the trail system. The Interurban Trail has been stalled in Pacific, but connections are being made between cities. Flooding and trails could be possible topics for a monthly meeting.

Conservation targets could include the river, creeks that run into the river, which would lead to problems and threats, such as culverts,

The various jurisdictions were invited to express their ideas of what they would like to see from the stewardship planning process and how they feel they could contribute.

Cindy James: She is involved with water quality, tmdl and 303D listings. DOE is currently testing in some areas for ph, temp and fecal coliform. Their emphasis on the LWR right now is fecal coliform. People from her agency can help landowners with water quality issues. Due to their data gathering we will have knowledge of the condition of certain parts of the river and this will be useful when deciding how to improve those areas. They will have available quarterly reports of the sites monitored and their condition.

Paula: She spoke about putting a friendly face on a government agency. How can we work together to achieve goals? Pacific's City Park is currently owned by King County, which intends to transfer it to the City (Pacific). It was once a landfill, and, although the bank was diked prior to that, it may contaminate the river at some point. Stormwater directed at the river may contribute pollution and flooding has occurred downstream of where the water is trunked under the bridge at A St. The velocity has increased around the bend and the Mayor wants to reopen the oxbow wildlife habitat areas on the left (east) side. The Mayor is a strong proponent of this project and feels that it will help the residents if the water is allowed to flow naturally. There is a concern about debris buildup, mosquitoes and a log jam. Beaver dams are also an issue. Vegetative cover has been removed over the years and many of the mobile homes near the river have grass lawns. A possible project would involve and encourage property owners to remove the lawns or part of them, leaving views, but adding habitat.

Aaron: Feels the city of Auburn has been progressive and that they want to manage the resources along the river. The city feels that they understand the need to preserve the LWR as open space. There is a lot of open space on the south side of the river and they can make the resource connection for people. They want to promote trails and access (including recreation) for the people. From the Muckleshoot land to A St a trail can connect to Pacific. There is also a mine on the LWR that is currently running but that will shut down and probably be developed at some point (Segally). Another point of interest is the Auburn Environmental Park (a wetland complex through Auburn).

This could potentially be a project for Low Impact Development or other environmentally friendly project.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.