



Future of the Lower White Salmon River

Public Meeting Summary

Saturday, May 17, 2014 | 9 a.m. – Noon
Husum Fire Hall

Notification and attendance:

About 45 people attended the meeting, which had been publicized through direct emails to stakeholder and interest groups from Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, forwarded emails to interest group mailing lists, a news release to 5 papers and announcements at Klickitat-White Salmon Science Conference and several local meetings attended by Mid-Columbia Fisheries. Meeting announcements were published in the Columbian, Hood River News and White Salmon Enterprise. Friends of the Columbia Gorge tweeted a notice of the meeting, Friends of the White Salmon posted a notice on their Facebook page and Wet Planet Whitewater posted a notice on their blog and their "White Salmon River" Facebook page.

As attendees signed in, they were asked to share what they cherish about the lower White Salmon River on a piece of paper and post it to a wall. Themes included natural beauty of the area, opportunities to see river restoration firsthand, opportunity to work together as a community, multi-use nature of basin, space to be free in nature, special place to live, missing Northwestern Lake, recreational opportunities, and holding PacifiCorp accountable.

Project introduction and meeting overview:

Margaret Neuman, Executive Director for Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She said the community has a unique opportunity to identify goals and a vision for the lower White Salmon River and to influence decisions that will affect the future quality of fish habitat in the lower river.

Steve Stampfli, White Salmon Watershed Management Committee member, also welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the watershed committee's history and goals. The committee has a goal of using collaborative natural resource problem solving. He said this was the first opportunity for the community to identify values for the river and how to improve the river.

Margaret said after Condit Dam was removed, the final disposition of the land owned by PacifiCorp was not decided. She explained that PacifiCorp has no current plans to sell the 500-600 acres it owns in the lower river basin, but the company retains all rights to do as they see fit with the land.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries applied for a grant to develop a vision and goal for the lower White Salmon River for fish habitat protection. The project area for the grant is the White Salmon river downstream from Buck Creek to the mouth, about 6 river miles. As part of the grant, this public meeting was held to share the initial results of habitat assessments and obtain public input on desired future conditions for the river corridor. She said that Mid-Columbia Fisheries hopes to develop strategies for protecting key habitats that are supported and supportable by the community. Mid-Columbia Fisheries hired a consulting firm, EnviroIssues, to assist with meeting facilitation and the public input process.

Susan Hayman, EnviroIssues facilitator, provided an overview of the agenda and asked attendees to listen and be neighborly throughout the meeting. She stated the meeting objectives, which were shown on a slide.

Sounding board:

Susan said we are well aware that the process to remove Condit Dam was difficult and divisive. This meeting is focused on fish habitat, but we want to provide an opportunity for people to share other issues of concern. Attendees were given the opportunity to state a pressing personal or community concern that affects how they think about the lower White Salmon River. Most attendees spoke during the round-robin activity. The following themes of concerns and statements were expressed:

Public access

- Support for maintaining public access to the river so people can experience it, e.g. via a trail.
- Concern about public access and related privacy issues around cabins. Want to allow access, but to manage or direct it to designated areas through a trail or other mechanism.
- Interest in maintaining adequate boater take outs in the lower river.

PacifiCorp lands and their management

- Support for keeping lands as natural and beautiful as possible; similar to current conditions
- Concern with future potential activities on lands now owned by PacifiCorp: Housing (both upland and area formerly underwater) clear cuts, riparian/upland habitat not properly cared for, illegal camping, trash.
- CONLA is developing a business plan to buy PacifiCorp land in the cabin area with goal of implementing stated agreement of “right of first refusal” for 110 acres.
- PacifiCorp’s future actions are a concern. Will the company be a landowner in the basin? Will the company sell to the highest bidder?
- Support for keeping land in public trust.
- Keep PacifiCorp lands open and allow timber thinning and other management activities to occur – for fire control and other purposes so surrounding landowners are not affected.
- Support for land ownership for multiple uses that allows fish restoration to occur.

PacifiCorp actions post dam removal

- Concern with lower Buck Creek following reservoir draining – ancient trash, including metal barrels, has been exposed, some trees were cut in the riparian zone, some cabins have had to be removed, others are at risk. Orange plastic needs to be removed. “Looks like a war zone.”
- Concern expressed that PacifiCorp is not engaging in conversation related to cleanup, land purchase, river access across cabin area.
- Concern with condemnation of cabins.
- PacifiCorp has been good to work with following dam removal.

Fish populations and fish habitat

- Support for habitat restoration for wild salmon, steelhead and freshwater fish populations in the river.
- Concern with loss of sport-fishing opportunities (currently and in the future). Keep fishing site open at the mouth. Support enhancing fisheries.
- Be observant and act in best interest of river; wait 5-8 years before making alterations to the river for habitat restoration; rushing could be a waste of time and resources. “Give her a chance. She’ll talk to you.”
- Someday there will be tribal fishing on the river to fulfill treaty rights, but tribes are waiting for fish to recolonize for about five years before making decisions. May take 15 years. Resource needs to be managed in way that doesn’t jeopardize fish coming back.
- Maintain large woody debris in river.
- Concerned with sustainability of the river and the balance with other river uses.

Other issues

- Concern expressed about cabin owners around former Northwestern Lake and the issues they face related to public access.
- Concern with fire control and fire hazards – especially with steep slopes.
- Concerned with climate change and effects to the river water quantity.

Presentations on assessment findings:

Jill Hardiman, USGS fish biologist, gave a presentation on a salmon habitat assessment for the lower six miles of the White Salmon River using existing data. Her analysis showed:

- Study area meets criteria for suitable habitat for all salmon life history stages.
- The lowest 2 miles of the river have the highest observed redd (spawning nest) densities.
- Redd densities are higher in areas with lower slopes/gradients.
- Re-vegetation projects will likely enhance salmon habitat.
- Large woody debris recruitment would enhance development of pools and cover for salmon.

Margaret presented Columbia Land Trust’s analysis of development suitability in the project area. The high level, general analysis was based on Columbia Gorge Scenic Area zoning, county zoning, county critical areas ordinances, slope, and shoreline management zoning. The analysis showed:

- Within the Columbia Gorge, open space zoning along the river is a restrictive zoning classification and protects the river corridor.
- Zoning designations in Skamania and Klickitat counties allow for some residential development in the project area, particularly around the cabin areas, and in parts of Klickitat County.
- Steep slopes in many parts of the project area corridor make development difficult.

A map provided a visual of the development suitability analysis results.

Question and answers followed the presentation:

- Was the 1990 Growth Management Act applied to the development suitability analysis?
Answer: No.
- Is there anyone here from PacifiCorp? Answer: No.
- Did you identify any areas for fish stranding with Bonneville Dam operations? Answer: A data gap exists here.
- There is no grading ordinance in Klickitat County. Is there one in Skamania? Answer: Unknown. Follow-up needed.
- Isn't zoning subject to change? Answer: The analysis was a point in time. Zoning can change.
- How does the scenic area supersede county zoning designations? Answer: The scenic area zoning supersedes county zoning. Counties can implement the scenic area designations. Skamania County implements scenic area designations, while the Gorge Commission implements scenic area zoning in the affected portions of Klickitat County.

“River café” small group discussions:

Anne Pressentin, EnviroIssues facilitator, described the procedure for small group discussions. The stated purpose was to encourage conversation and discussion that results in understanding of issues and interests in the basin. The purpose was not to gain consensus. Each table had about 6 participants, including a host to help record the conversation. A series of three questions were discussed for 15 minutes each. After each question, the people at the tables moved to a different table.

Round 1: It is the year 2025. What does the project area look like: What social, economic, and ecological benefits is it providing; what is the ownership (public, private, mix)?

Physical description: Half the groups included a description of the future condition, with most describing a natural setting. Comments included:

- River will still be in flux, but closer to a natural state.
- Physically it will be similar.
- More rain-driven.
- Look untouched, pristine, restored to what it looked like 100s of years ago.
- Gorgeous, park-like.

Benefits: This category included several sub-categories stemming from the original question – social, economic and ecological. Comments related to public access to the river were made by all groups.

Balance: Four groups discussed need for balance between recreation (social/economic benefits) and stream/ecosystem function, so that recreation does not impact fish or aquatic habitats. At the same time recreational access can lead to increased awareness of ecological functions. One group said it may be good to limit boating because it can be environmentally destructive and rafters/boaters want to see good, clean habitat.

Access: Most groups discussed public access to the river for fishing, boating and other recreation. They envisioned people able to responsibly enjoy the river with good, defined public access points or trails. Some people said designated access or trails could have an education component for river users and others. Fixing up the old bridge for pedestrian use was identified. Some concerns were expressed with a public trail: trash, hunting, off-leash dogs that affect wildlife, effects to privacy.

Safety: A couple of groups mentioned a vision of safety where recreation areas are well-taken care of, safe from fire and provide safe put-in and take-outs for boaters.

Tribal and public fishing: Tribal harvest and public recreational fishing was envisioned in the future by a couple of groups. These comments were made with comments envisioning healthy fish runs.

Economy: Groups connected recreational opportunities (tourism, fishing, boating, rafting, trails) with future economic benefits. Some people said that protecting the area from new construction will support economic development. Some people also said property development and payment of property taxes will aid the economy. Water availability was identified as a potential limiter to economic benefits by one group. Another said residential over-development and water withdrawals could put pressure on available water for fish.

Ecology: The groups identified the following ecological benefits in the future: functioning ecosystem, robust returning salmon runs, and gravel coming back. A concern with trampling of riparian vegetation by river uses also was mentioned. One group wrote: Fish left alone. A couple of groups said to wait and see if active management approach is needed: "Let the river change first by itself."

Housing and development: Some people said cabin owners will still be in the project area in 10 years; they do not want buyout. Some concerns also were highlighted: Development free-for-all, road building on steep slopes, houses too close to river. One group said there should be no further development from the bridge at Northwestern Lake Road to Columbia on west side.

Property ownership: Groups generally said there would be a mix of property ownership in the future where there are private cabins and conservation lands owned by public entity (e.g. U.S. Forest Service) or a trust. Several people mentioned allowing cabin owners to buy land (under agreement of "first right of refusal") or maintain current lease arrangement under current or different ownership ("partnership between cabin owners and land trust to hold land in trust"). Some people clearly favored public or land trust ownership, but questioned whether it was realistic. One group said public access was more important than ownership and was particularly interested in publicly-accessible boater take outs.

Land management: Several visions for land management were identified: Recreation use statutes applied, area is not a fire hazard, potential to extend wild and scenic area, and good land use planning and management. In addition, land management concerns were mentioned: Brush jungle, county zoning is not adequate -- variances granted; and money will trump other benefits (e.g. boater take-outs).

Other comments related to future vision:

- Problems created by dam removal are resolved.

- Find a way not to “love it to death.”
- There will be more people on the landscape with growing population.
- WRIA process should be completed.
- Global warming will negatively affect everything and future generations.

Round 2: Given the current state of the fish habitat (per the assessments), what are reasonable goals to achieve in the next 10 years?

Public Access and Recreation: All groups discussed recreational and public access and generally called for a planning process. Some people want to encourage more recreation with a goal of a destination place while others simply want to manage it. E.g. “avoid area being loved to death.” One group said opinion leaders in the boating community will need to be involved in planning to better understand private boating practices. Identified access goals included:

- Recreation plan to address: garbage, pioneered trails/erosion, dogs, wildfire risks, fishing access (tribal and public), funding, partners.
- River-appropriate amount use and timing.
- Trail established that directs people to right places for access, respects private land and ecology.
- Clearly define access points with signage that build up or off of existing ones, such as park, powerhouse, hatchery.
- Trespass issues resolved.

Education and training also was a clear and important theme related to access and recreation goals:

- Clearer definitions and explanations of zoning to private landowners.
- Consulting to private landowners on working with community and habitat.
- Education and outreach for boaters, rafters, trail users, etc with signs and training on redds, control of animals, trash removal, fire prevention and other topics. (Rafters and boaters were identified as a critical audience by one group.)
- Law enforcement presence.

Land management and ownership: Most groups identified a goal of addressing PacifiCorp land ownership questions within 10 years. One group’s goal was “less uncertainty” in this area. Groups generally looked for a mix of ownership by cabin owners and public or land trust ownership.

Other stated land management goals included:

- Land use planning to help achieve visions in 2025
 - Maintain existing uses
 - Protects existing rights
 - Ecological-system/conservation goals for fish recovery/upland habitats
- Protect good zoning; work with Klickitat County
- Counties work together to have development plan for basin
- Minimum or same amount of residential development; want to let it look like we left it alone
- Fear of over-development

- Counties do their job enforcing shoreline protections

Groups also expressed land management goals related to safety:

- Provide emergency access for wildfire, recreation safety.
- Reduce fire risk by clearing dead trees and shrubs.

Aquatic, riparian and uplands habitats: Management of large woody debris (LWD) for fish habitat and recreational hazards was mentioned in multiple groups. Some people said LWD should be removed and others said the natural process should be mimicked. Two groups called for balancing fish needs with recreational safety. Ongoing monitoring of LWD and gravel beds were identified as goals. During discussion, enhancing tributary habitat for a variety of life stages (e.g. Buck Creek) was identified as a goal. Other habitat goals identified included:

- Healthy fish habitat.
- Let river do its processes.
- Restored riparian forest.
- Manage invasives or let run course somewhat.

Fish management: Groups stated goals for healthy and abundant wild fish runs, possible hatchery supplementation if needed, fishing enforcement, understanding of what truly disturbs fish and updating a fisheries management plan.

Water resources: Two groups discussed goals for initiating water resources planning and water rights discussions. One group discussed transferring water rights associated with Condit Dam to Klickitat County in a public process.

Overall planning: Two groups called for “realistic” and “prudent” goal planning for the future. Another group’s goal was for agencies to have a plan for their role in protection. The same group said policies, education and enforcement of goals will not be possible without locals stepping up and working together and that an active, engaged community is crucial to developing realistic and effective goals.

Decision-making process: Some groups talked about the need for transparent, collaborative decision-making. Comments included:

- Cooperative dialogue between PacifiCorp/public/county.
- Community hone in on what they want, define it and fight for it.
- Public scrutiny / transparency of land use practices.

Dam removal obligations: One group included a goal of “Review and achieve dam removal accountability plans/obligations.”

Round 3: Per the assessments, which areas are most important for us to focus on to meet our goals for fish habitat?

During this round, some groups focused on specific areas, while others had recommendations for the entire project area. There was a strong recommendation during discussion that a focus on tributaries for any near-term active fish habitat restoration work is important while the mainstem continues its natural stabilization and recovery.

Location-based focus areas:

- Lowest reach at Bonneville Pool/river mouth
 - Need to understand pool influences at fish habitat
 - Altered pool habitat is largely misunderstood; potential dredging may be needed
- Instream habitat: Lower two miles priority, protect spawning areas
- “The Narrows” – LWD and rafter safety
- PacifiCorp owned – forested
 - Mainstem habitat – spawning habitat above
 - Potential for effect
- Tributaries
 - Above dam provides opportunity, but need to wait for settling out (refugia, pool, etc.)
 - With mainstem in flux 5 – 8 years, potential for restoration in tributaries in near future
 - Monitor the tributaries
 - Continue work already underway
 - Buck Creek: Restore and clean up impacts from dam removal – half mile upstream from confluence with mainstem; remove metal drum
 - Confluence of Mill Creek
- Riparian areas
 - Intermittent streams
 - Steep slopes
 - 500 – 1000 feet on both sides / but we don’t have it because of homes.
 - Above dam; stabilize old lake bottom
- Within steep gorge area – don’t need to manage
 - Exception: Leave wood alone for habitat and to observe natural restoration
- Northwestern Lake Park area
 - Newly revealed lands downstream of NW Lake Park needs restoration.
 - Maintain access
 - NW Lake Park to Mill Creek to former dam site – managed use and access defined and communicated with signage
- Manage and encourage native plant growth of replanted areas
- Highly develop-able areas – most vulnerable
 - Get them less develop-able
 - Restoration / protective – focused uses
 - Lock in zoning and enforce current zoning more effectively
 - Look at areas which might be developed
- No one spot. All important.

- Husum Falls is important

Other Focus Areas:

- Now watching and monitoring. Future maybe different because the river may change
- Development protection (beyond just six miles upstream)
 - In medium-high suitability areas and upstream
 - Enforcement of critical areas ordinances
- Zoning with counties
- Large woody debris areas that provide fish habitat
 - Need to identify these areas on map – but they will continue to change
 - Need to understand what large woody debris is beneficial
 - Need to work on clear management of large woody debris
 - Rafting safety
- Provide clear procedures, regulations, training at designated access areas related to fish, fish habitat and safety at parking and unloading areas at river mouth, at Northwestern Park, at trail heads and entry/exit points for rafters and anglers.
- Outreach to recreationists on fish goals
- Conservation and protection of pristine areas

Following the small group discussions, the groups reported on results from each of the rounds.

Wrap-up and next steps:

Margaret and Susan thanked everyone for coming. They said a meeting summary would be developed and posted online along with all the meeting materials. Comment forms were available for anyone who wanted to provide individual written comments. In addition, a short survey to evaluate the meeting would be sent out.

The meeting adjourned about 12:15 p.m.

Evaluation results:

A week following the meeting, a link to an evaluation survey was distributed via email to attendees who provided email addresses. Of those, about half responded. The following themes emerged survey:

- Respondents said the meeting was a valuable use of their time
- Respondents said the meeting was facilitated effectively and met the stated objectives
- Respondents said the agenda items and activities were useful or very useful.
- People said they were notified of the meeting through email most frequently.
- People expressed interest in staying involved and informed in the future.

Mid-Columbia Fisheries will use the feedback when designing future public engagement efforts.

June 9, 2014



Future of the Lower White Salmon River Online Public Meeting Summary

June 27 – July 21, 2014

Notification and attendance:

About 35 people accessed the meeting, which had been publicized through direct emails to stakeholder and interest groups from Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, forwarded emails to interest group mailing lists, news release to six papers and one radio station, and an announcement and fliers at the White Salmon River Fest held July 9. Meeting announcements were published in the Columbian and Hood River News. Mid-Columbia Fisheries had a notice on the home page and project web page.

Of the 35 people who attended, 30 appeared to be new to the project, including those who provided online comments. The people who provided comments during the online meeting did not sign in at the in-person meeting.

Format:

The software MeetingSphere was used to present the meeting information, track comments and promote discussion. The software allowed all information presented at the in-person public meeting from May 17, 2014, to be presented. This included:

- Welcome
- Fish habitat assessment findings (slides and narrated PowerPoint)
- Development suitability assessment (slides only)
- Discussion questions

Dialogue and Comment Results:

In 2025, what does the project area look like?

- I hope the area is a combination of intelligently and respectfully regulated public and private landholdings, allowing easy public access to this incredible resource. We need to balance the need for economic and population growth with the need to preserve a very special environment. There are currently a number of residential structures on the river and there will undoubtedly be increasing pressures in this direction. But we need to maintain the quality of the environment and the viewscape for which thoughtful regulation and enforcement will be necessary.

In 2025, what social, ecological, and economic benefits is the project area providing?

- Hopefully, threatened fish species are in healthy numbers, tribal legacy fishing rights have returned, recreational river users are providing both economic and social benefit, and development guidelines protect the river from adverse impacts.
- Since we are a long way from the vision above, we all have to be willing to respect the rights of others and strive to agree on guidelines and terms that honor each other's visions for the river.

- I would like to see the remains of the covered bridge that spans the river below the Condit powerhouse either removed, or better yet renovated and made useful as a connection point for pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists, from the Underwood side (which already has a nice trail leading up to the bridge) then connecting to Powerhouse road or potentially a foot trail that runs the length of the former Stave pipe that connected Condit Dam to the powerhouse before it was removed. A couple of fishermen's access trails coming off a main trail could provide some access off that main trail for fishing and kayak access/egress. Thanks for your consideration and for making the meeting happen.
- Hopefully the area will provide benefits of access for public recreation (rafting, kayaking, fishing), small-scale boutique lodging, low-density housing, strong ecological health (water, fisheries, forests, viewscapes) through careful regulation, and a strong and united community intent on thoughtful preservation of this remarkable place.

In 2025, what is the project area ownership? (public, private, mix)

- I believe the mix will be largely determined by topography and access. I hope it will be about a 60/40 private/public ownership, and that the public lands will reflect unbuildable extreme topography and adequate public access to the river resources.

Which areas of/along the river are most important to focus on to meet fish habitat goals?

- Careful regulation of the developed and developable areas will be critical to maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Responsible development that will be respectful and supportive of healthy fish habitat must be accomplished or social and environmental conflicts may destroy this resource.

What are reasonable goals to achieve within the project area in the next ten years?

- I see 6 major goals:
 - Goal 1 - Determine when river is at its normal seasonal behavior for sedimentation, large woody debris, flow, etc. post dam removal.
 - Goal 2 - Identify prime habitat for key salmonids for spawning, rearing and migration in the White Salmon and its tributaries.
 - Goal 3 - Establishment agreements among recreational river users, tribal and agency fish biologists to protect prime fish habitat.
 - Goal 4 - Identify where the tribal fishing sites will be located.
 - Goal 5 - Clarify what groups have legal claims to activities in the White Salmon and the precedence of these claims
 - Goal 6 - Establish working relationships (ideally enforceable agreements) among the river users (tribe, fishery agencies, recreational users, river adjacent property owners) for shared use of the river and respect for each others use of the river.
- I would like to see the recovery of the Northwestern Park area and the regeneration of the post lake community in the area. In regards to this I could imagine the neighborhood of the CONLA cabins being known as Northwestern Park; renaming of the roads; Northwestern Park Road / Parkview Road; and the Wild and Scenic White Salmon area be extended all the way to the mouth at the Columbia. Recovery of the habitat on tributaries is a good goal and focus. Culvert replacement on Mill Creek at Lakeview road is a priority that UCD is working on ... more education and collaborations as well as enhanced recreational use of the park. Informational signage and some commemoration of the history of the First Nations people as well as the era

of the lake along with native plant signage and revegetation. Perhaps the park is publicly owned or by a stewardship group along with a Wild and Scenic green corridor along the lower White Salmon. I look forward to more discussion and collaboration toward these goals through SHARE and other opportunities. Riverfest at Northwestern Park in 2015! Thank You.

What questions do you have about the project?

- How long do geomorphologists, hydrologists, etc. think it will take for the White Salmon to establish normal river dynamics - seasonal flow, sedimentation, etc. post removal of Condit Dam?

Do you have any general comments or feedback?

n/a



Future of the Lower White Salmon River

Results of Online Survey

Held Oct. 15 - 27, 2014

Survey Purpose

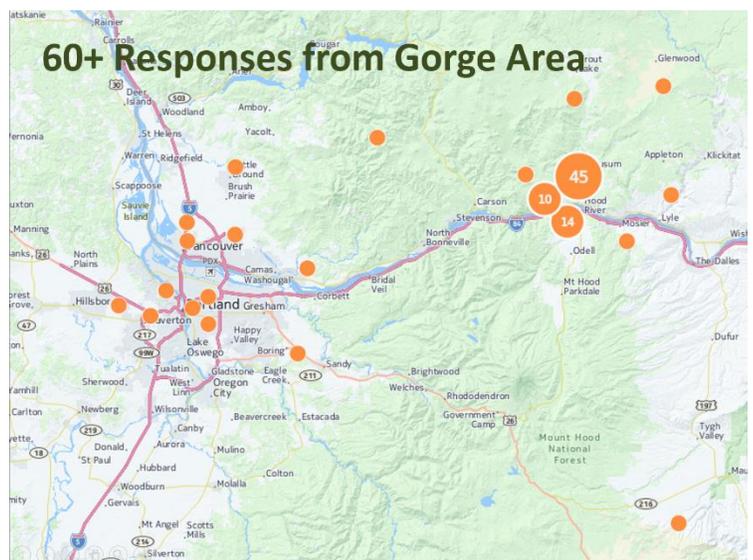
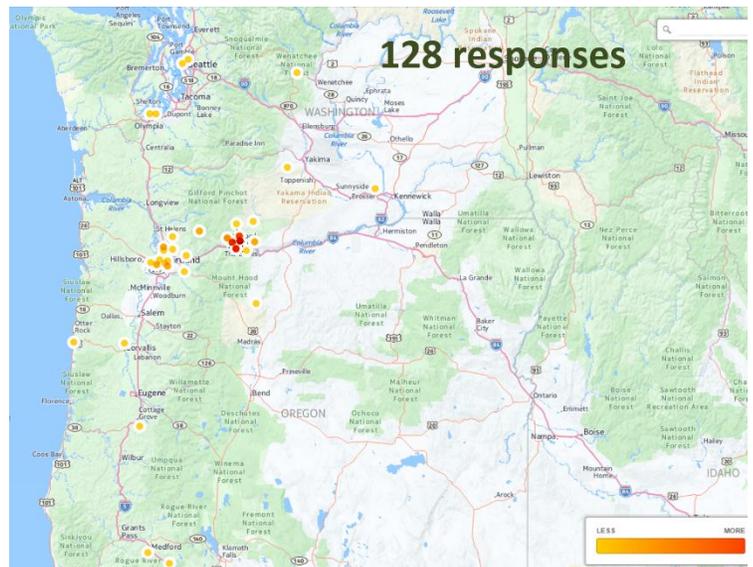
- The purpose of the survey was to reflect back ideas heard during previous project public engagement activities and gain additional input on draft vision, goals and geographic focus areas for the project.
- The survey was not intended to establish statistically significant results.

Notification

- Mid-Columbia Fisheries publicized the survey via, webpage, emails to project mailing list, Facebook post and a news release that resulted in an article in the Columbian.

Results

- 128 survey responses were collected from participants in Washington, Oregon, California, Wyoming and Pennsylvania. About half came from the Gorge area.
 - 77 survey responses from Washington, about 48 from the local area
 - 30 survey responses from Oregon, about 14 from Hood River
- Respondents most commonly referred to themselves as:
 - Boaters (50%)
 - Year-round residents (54%)
 - Interested in ecological restoration (70%)
 - Interested in salmon recovery (78%)
- **What we heard: Fish habitat** -- Four primary concepts related to fish habitat emerged from the survey:
 - A healthy river ecosystem that supports all fish life stages is a priority
 - Effects to aquatic resources should be considered when





Future of the Lower White Salmon River

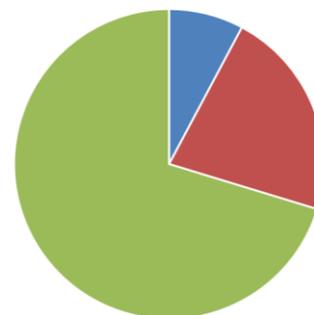
Results of Online Survey

Held Oct. 15 - 27, 2014

- development decisions are made
- Support for continued natural river restoration over time
- Large wood in river supported for salmon, but causes a concern for boater safety
- **We we heard: Other concepts** -- Several other concepts came up in the survey that were important to the community but did not fit within the scope of the project.
 - Condit Dam was removed to improve fish habitat – not to create more recreation opportunities.
 - PacifiCorp needs to follow through on commitments to mitigate effects on private property owners and recreationists.
 - The uncertainty of future land ownership of PacifiCorp-owned property in the project area concerns many people.
 - There are many opportunities and ideas for how to enhance public recreational access within the project area.
 - Northwestern Park should remain a public park.
 - Property-owners are concerned about impacts to their property and their solitude due to increased river recreation.
 - There is a need to improve and enhance emergency access and response time to the river and shoreline residences.
 - Residents are concerned about wildfire risks

- Respondents shared their preferences for ownership of currently undeveloped PacifiCorp lands in the project area:
 - 92% favored public and/or trust ownership
 - 8% said undeveloped lands should remain privately held without new conservation easements or restrictions.

Future Ownership for Currently Undeveloped Lands



- Private ownership
- Conservation ownership focused on steepest slopes
- Public/trust ownership



Future of the Lower White Salmon River

Results of Online Survey

Held Oct. 15 - 27, 2014

- **Vision statement for fish conservation:**
 - The following statements generated strong support with 87 – 92 percent of respondents saying they agree or strongly agree:
 - The river and banks in a natural state, including healthy riparian areas and functioning instream habitat.
 - Undeveloped lands held in public or land trust ownership, or a mix of that ownership and private ownership, that leads to protection of lands ill-suited to development due to steep slopes and proximity to the river.
 - Support for economically-beneficial uses such as rafting, fishing, hiking while protecting key fish habitat.
 - Continued river restoration.
 - Fish habitat that supports all salmon life history stages and produces healthy fish runs for fishing.
 - Defined public access points that balance ecosystem function, landowner privacy, safety, recreational opportunities and economic benefits.
 - Effects on natural resources are a key consideration when development decisions are made, particularly on steep slopes.

- **Fish Habitat Conservation Goals:**
 - The following statements generated strong support with 80 – 90 percent of respondents saying they agree or strongly agree:
 - Re-vegetate riparian and upland areas to promote healthy streambanks, reduce sediment transport to the river, and enhance salmon habitat.
 - Increase retention of naturally-occurring large woody debris to enhance development of pools and cover for salmon and re-locate large wood if necessary to reduce hazards to boaters.
 - Manage public access so that it doesn't adversely impact in-river fish habitat or adjacent riparian areas.
 - Increase public or trust ownership of currently undeveloped parcels in the project area to reduce potential impacts to fish habitat from future property development adjacent to the river.
 - Educate river users about spawning gravel identification, large woody debris and its benefits to salmon, value of the prevention of invasive species transport and spread, public access locations, and fish management goals.
 - Protect existing native riparian trees and shrubs from land clearing as required by existing shoreline regulations.

- **Geographic focus areas for conservation:**
 - Survey question was problematic.



Future of the Lower White Salmon River

Public Meeting Summary

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2014 | 9 – 11 a.m.

Husum Fire Hall

Notification, attendance and public survey:

About 30 people attended the meeting. The meeting was publicized through direct emails to stakeholder and interest groups from Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, forwarded emails to interest group mailing lists, and a news release to local newspapers. Meeting announcements were published in the Columbian and Hood River News. Meeting notices were also posted on Mid-Columbia Fisheries' website and Facebook page. Wet Planet Rafting posted a notice on their Facebook page and Underwood Conservation District included a notice in an electronic newsletter. Attendance was likely affected by winter weather conditions in the Columbia River Gorge.

Prior to the meeting, a public survey was opened for the period of Oct. 16 – Oct. 27, 2014 to collect feedback on the draft vision, goals and geographic focus areas for the lower White Salmon River developed from previous project activities. The survey was distributed through direct emails to stakeholder and interest groups from Mid-Columbia Fisheries, published in the Columbian newspaper, and posted on Mid-Columbia Fisheries' website and Facebook page. The results of the survey were discussed during the meeting.

Project introduction and meeting overview:

Margaret Neuman, Executive Director for Mid-Columbia Fisheries, opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and provided a brief project overview and update. She explained that Mid-Columbia Fisheries is preparing a document to outline an approach to fish habitat conservation on the lower six miles of the White Salmon River, in the area formerly affected by Condit Dam. While PacifiCorp has indicated that it has no current plans to divest itself of its lands along the White Salmon River, the approach document will be made available to PacifiCorp, county governments and other agencies to inform decisions regarding these lands in the future.

Anne Pressentin, Envirolssues facilitator, reviewed the agenda and explained planned activities for the meeting. Anne asked participants to be active listeners and to engage in constructive conversations.

Margaret explained that Mid-Columbia Fisheries worked with USGS to conduct a fish habitat assessment and a development suitability analysis in the project area to inform the approach document. The fish habitat assessment found the project area meets suitable habitat criteria, with the lower reaches of the river containing the highest observed redd density. Margaret also summarized the results of a development suitability analysis completed as part of this project. Various forms of development are allowed in the project area, though development potential is affected by steep slopes, zoning, and national scenic area designations.

Questions and comments

Question: How much of the project area includes improved property sites?

Response: Of the 534 acres in the study area, 110 acres are considered improved.

Question: How many total redds were counted in the salmon habitat assessment?

Response: USGS estimated about 4,000 Chinook redds in the main stem of the White Salmon River in 2013. The redds were very dense in some places and difficult to count.

Comment: There are land use designations that have been grandfathered that could affect the future of the project area and should be researched and considered.

Public survey results

Anne discussed the results of the public survey. The purpose of the survey was to reflect back ideas heard during previous project activities and gain additional input on draft vision, goals and geographic focus areas for the project. The survey was not intended to establish statistically significant results.

- 128 survey responses were collected from participants in Washington, Oregon, California, Wyoming and Pennsylvania. About half came from the Gorge area.
 - 77 survey responses from Washington, about 48 from the local area
 - 30 survey responses from Oregon, about 14 from Hood River
- Respondents most commonly referred to themselves as:
 - Boaters (50%)
 - Year-round residents (54%)
 - Interested in ecological restoration (70%)
 - Interested in salmon recovery (78%)
- Respondents shared their preferences for ownership of currently undeveloped PacifiCorp lands in the project area:
 - 92% favored public and/or trust ownership
 - 8% said undeveloped lands should remain privately held without new conservation easements or restrictions.
- Four primary concepts related to fish habitat emerged from the survey:
 - A healthy river ecosystem that supports all fish life stages is a priority
 - Effects to aquatic resources should be considered when development decisions are made
 - Support for continued natural river restoration over time
 - Large wood in river supported for salmon, but causes a concern for boater safety

Anne explained that several other concepts came up in the survey that were important to the community but did not fit within the scope of the project. A poster with the concepts listed was displayed on the wall at the meeting. Mid-Columbia Fisheries will pass these concepts on to appropriate public and private entities (see appendix).

Revised vision and goals

Anne reviewed the draft vision and goals developed from input collected during previous project activities. The draft vision and goals were posted on large posters on the wall in the meeting. Anne asked meeting participants to take a break, read the vision and goal posters together, and encouraged them to underline words or phrases that were confusing or needed additional clarification. Participants could also write comments and questions on sticky notes and post them on the posters.

Following the break, Anne reviewed the feedback on the posters with the greater group to determine the level of agreement with each comment.

Vision: Fish habitat conservation – comments received:

- Use active voice for all vision statements.
- Vision should specify a timeline, particularly for healthy salmon runs.
- The term “proximity to the river” is not clear.
 - Give consideration to properties that have a visual connection to the river.
 - One person said property development close to the river may not have an impact. Another said that groundwater connections from development activities far from the river could affect river habitat.
 - Suggested using the term “connection to the river.”
- Add a vision statement for developable lands – to go with vision statement about undevelopable lands.
 - Vision needs more detail about what is envisioned for developable land priorities.
 - Vision needs more clarity regarding difference between PacifiCorp lands and other private lands.
 - Suggested conservation easements on PacifiCorp lands and low-density development on other private lands.
- The term “restoration” is too broad.
 - Suggested the vision specify “active” or “passive” restoration.
 - Involve the community in deciding the type of development on private lands.
- Add a vision statement for Native American values and interests.
- Vision for river restoration needs more specificity.
 - Suggested a vision of river with functioning ecosystem processes.
 - Vision should specify restoration to “riparian areas” in addition to the river.
 - Vision should include restoration of upland habitat including oak woodlands and deer/elk winter range

Goals: Fish habitat conservation – comments received

- Goals should include the management/removal of invasive plant species.
- PacifiCorp should be held accountable for the long-term restoration of riparian areas.

- Rephrase land clearing goal: “As required by existing shoreline regulations, protect existing native trees and shrubs from land clearing.”
- Education goals should include a component to help river users understand the value of riparian habitat for healthy fish runs.
- Landowners need to be educated in addition to river users.
- Goals should include clear definitions for rules and regulations so they can be communicated and enforced effectively.
 - Rules about public river access and high water lines are confusing and difficult to enforce.
 - Clarify how “wild and scenic” designations affect river access.
- The term “adjacent to the river” is too specific.
 - Give consideration to properties that have a visual connection to the river.
 - Properties that are not adjacent to the river can still have wells connected to groundwater from the river.
 - Suggested using the term “connection to the river.”
- Public access management goal should include considerations for impacts to fish and private property.
- Public access goals should specify river access for people of all ability levels.

Anne thanked everyone for their participation and said the input would be considered as the vision and goal statements are finalized.

Geographic focus areas – dot exercise

Margaret said the project had identified several geographic focus areas where attention is needed based on fish habitat goals within the next 10 years. The project is asking for public input on the areas that should be given the highest priority.

Anne explained that the geographic focus areas were posted on easels in the meeting room beside maps of the project area. Each participant was given three colored dots and asked to stick them next to the three focus areas they thought should be given the highest priority. The color of the dots indicated a priority rank: orange for first priority, yellow for second priority and green for third priority. Anne explained that the dot exercise was a way to collect input on public priorities but was not meant to be a voting process.

The dot exercise resulted in the following priority ranking for the geographic focus areas:

1. Highly developable areas which are most vulnerable
2. County enforcement of existing shoreline protection regulations
3. Fish spawning areas
4. In-stream protection within and adjacent to the lowest two miles of the river, due to redd densities

5. Define and manage access and use from Northwestern Park to the former Condit Dam site
6. Restore fish passage by addressing blockages in Buck and Mill Creeks
7. Entire corridor from mouth to Buck Creek
8. Retention of large wood in the short term and consideration of adding large wood in appropriate areas in the future
9. Newly revealed (i.e. formerly submerged) lands downstream of Northwestern Park
10. In-stream and riparian restoration in tributaries, including Buck Creek and Mill Creek

Next steps

Margaret said the meeting materials would be posted on MCFEG's website with a meeting summary. The draft approach document will be available for review on Dec. 8. The final document will be available in early 2015.