



Thurston County Board of Commissioners Work Session Summary

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| Date of Work Session: | Wednesday, January 17, 2018 |
| Time: | 9:30am |
| Office/Department: | Community Planning and Economic Development |
| Subject: | HCP Mitigation Discussion |
| Staff Contact/Author: | Name/Title: Polly Stoker / Admin Asst Phone: 5473 |
| Attendees: | <p>Commissioners Present: Bud Blake, Gary Edwards, John Hutchings</p> <p>County Manager: Ramiro Chavez</p> <p>Other Staff: Joshua Cummings, Cynthia Wilson, Christina Chaput, Andrew Deffobis, Travis Burns, Elizabeth Petrich, Michelle Underwood, Bryan Dominique, Meghan Porter, Mike Kain</p> |
| Discussion Points: | <p>As requested at the 12/14/17 briefing, staff reviewed the proposed 10% mitigation concept with the Board, in hopes of submitting a document to USFWS to review as an option for the draft HCP.</p> <p>Ramiro stated the concept includes conservation easements as an option. This model is a higher level discussion of all options including fee title.</p> <p>Josh drew out a proposed formula for calculating take acreage for the draft HCP. The Commissioners like the formula Josh provided.</p> <p>Staff recommendation is to draft a letter to USFWS to get their input on this concept.</p> <p>Comm. Edwards: Funding source was a big issue to USFWS. Roughly \$1.5 million needs to come from somewhere, such as Conservation Futures. We could put that in the document as a funding source. Ramiro agreed the next step is to discuss funding if USFWS supports this idea. Commission Edwards opinion the 10% is actually more than what we are finding since there was only gophers found on 1%. He envisions the funding source coming from every citizen through Conservation Futures and he thinks it should be county wide coverage, not just Thurston county activities. If we can use USFWS Section 6 or NRCS money, then we can use Conservation Futures as seed money in the future. Commission Edwards believes staff is headed in the right direction. He questions the maintenance component of mitigation, but believes this can be worked out. Ramiro stated the County still need to come up with funds to pay for the purchase of conservation easements.</p> <p>Comm. Blake asked if Conservation Futures funds would be a primary or secondary funding source. Comm. Edwards sees it as primary. Comm. Blake doesn't think there is time to have it as the primary source at this point.</p> <p>Ramiro stated that if you want to include all jurisdictions, that may bring all the liability all on the county. Comm. Hutchings also agreed including all jurisdictions at this point would be problematic.</p> |

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| | <p>Josh confirmed we don't know what USFWS will think about the 10%. Comm. Edwards would assume this has to go back to Washington, D.C. for review and that's where we will have the ability to have this argument even if the local office does not agree.</p> <p>Ramiro wants to know if staff has the Commissioners approval to submit the 10% scenario now. The last time we came up with the 10% was related to the # of applications which has gone through the process. If you may consider a different % we don't have a process to show where we got that #.</p> <p>Comm. Edwards stated his opinion is gophers are only found on 1% of sites screened. If we use a 10% occupancy model, he believes the extra should cover Tumwater School District. He doesn't see why they would have to do their own HCP.</p> <p>Comm. Edwards is not supportive of the 10% model if it does not include Tumwater School District.</p> <p>Josh asked the attorneys their opinion moving the conversation about the 10% to USFWS. Travis stated we don't have any liability if we are just asking USFWS to consider this scenario.</p> <p>Ramiro asked if staff has approval to draft the letter outlining this model, to be submitted to USFWS.</p> <p>Comm. Edwards said yes, but he would like the letter to include statistics/findings from the interim permitting process. Also, please include that there are already lands conserved for the gopher in Thurston County.</p> <p>Commissioners will have a chance to review the letter before it is sent</p> |
| Results/Board Direction: | <p>The Commissioners unanimously agreed to direct staff to draft a letter to USFWS regarding using gopher occupancy to assess take in the draft HCP.</p> |