

MINUTES  
**WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD**  
**WESPAK-SE WETLAND METHODOLOGY WORKSHOP**  
March 12, 2016, 8:30 am to 5 pm CBJ Assembly Chambers

**Meeting Summary**

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Amy Sumner, Brenda Wright, Lisa Hoferkamp, Irene Gallion, Nina Horne, Andrew Campbell, Hal Geiger

Board Members Absent: Ben Haight, Percy Frisby

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Teri Camery, Senior Planner

Public Present: Debbie Hart, Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinator, serving as facilitator; Sarah Power, ADFG; Neil Stichert, USFWS; Frank Rue; Chris Hay-Jahans, University of Alaska Southeast; Dr. Paul Adamus, Adamus Resource Assessment

Meeting called to order at 8:40 am

A. Welcome, Introductions, Purpose

Ms. Camery provided the background on development and use of the WESPAK-SE methodology in regards to the Juneau Wetlands Management Plan update and the federal grant. She defined the scope of the workshop as outlined in the contract, with the purpose of educating the board about the methodology, and she explained the Board's role.

Ms. Hart explained her role as facilitator for the meeting and described the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership's (SEAKFHP) technical review of the WESPAK-SE methodology.

Dr. Adamus explained his background and history with wetland assessment in Juneau from the 1980s to the present.

B. Southeast Alaska Land Trust (SEALTrust) use of WESPAK-SE

Ms. Gillum explained the mission of SEALTrust, its fee-in-lieu of mitigation program, and its use of the WESPAK-SE methodology. Ms. Gillum's powerpoint presentation is attached for reference.

### C. Overview of WESPAK-SE Methodology and Wetlands Review Board Questions

Dr. Paul Adamus provided a broad overview of the WESPAK-SE methodology including: how it was developed, adopted by the State of Oregon, and then adapted for use in Southeast Alaska and also in Alberta, Canada; the Wetlands Review Board's and CBJ's history of reviewing the method; how the Corps of Engineers and other agencies use WESPAK and other rapid assessment methods; the benefits and limitations of rapid assessment methods; the science behind the WESPAK method; key definitions used in the method such as indicators and variables; and the formulas and models used with each of the functions and values evaluated in the method. Dr. Adamus completed review of approximately 10 functions and values and this meeting; the remainder will be addressed at subsequent meetings. Dr. Adamus' powerpoint presentation is attached for reference.

Dr. Adamus addressed specific board questions regarding bird species addressed in the method. Participants addressed the limitations of CBJ's wetland assessments, which focused on large vacant parcels in the borough that are likely to be developed, versus SEALTrust's assessments, which were chosen as a representative sample of wetland types throughout Southeast Alaska.

Board members discussed normalization practices with Dr. Adamus, followed by an explanation of different categorization methods with a focus on the Jenks Optimization method and different weighting methods. Dr. Adamus noted that averaging scores is commonplace in the planning context even though it may be frowned upon by scientists. The Municipality of Anchorage uses an averaging approach.

The Board had an extensive discussion on the carbon sequestration function. This function does not have an accompanying value score, because it is valued by ecologists for release but has value to the climate for retention.

The Board discussed confidence intervals for the different functions. Dr. Adamus said that he would provide more information on this topic at subsequent meetings. This issue will also be addressed through the SEAKFTP Technical Review of the method. Dr. Adamus emphasized that to preserve the integrity of the WESPAK method, functions that have low confidence should not be removed, however they could be weighted differently. He noted that confidence and level of certainty is highly subjective.

The Board discussed the anadromous fish function at length and also debated its value calculation. No firm conclusions were reached; this topic will be revisited in future meetings if possible. Dr. Adamus noted that function and value scores are independent from each other; value does not dictate function, nor does function dictate value.

Ms. Gillum described SEALTrust's evaluation of the anadromous fish function with its Interagency Review Team and described the currently proposed formula for averaging functions

and values, noting that this proposal has not been finalized and has not yet been accepted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Camery said that CBJ does not have to follow SEALTrust, however it is important that the Corps accepts CBJ's method to give it the most strength and utility. In this respect it will be important to CBJ to see what the Corps accepts for SEALTrust.

**Facilitator notes, compiled by Debbie Hart, SEAKFTP Coordinator and meeting facilitator:**

**CBJ Wetland Review Board WESPAK-SE Overview Meeting with Dr. Adamus – March 12, 2016**

**DRAFT - Facilitation Notes**

Presentation Highlights:

- Important Terms and Definitions used in WESPAK-SE
  - Functions
  - Values
  - Indicators (Office and Field)
  - Models
  - Attributes
  - AA – specific wetland or sub-wetland
- Validity of WESPAK-SE Method
  - Method Limitations (based upon Rapid Assessment criteria)
  - Assumptions (framing each of the functions and values used in the method, calculations, weightings)
  - Repeatability (questions used in data collection, benefits of redundancy)
  - Peer review/subject matter expert input (workshops used in development of method)
  - Data Collection (used in refinement of the method)
  - Goal for scientific integrity to be preserved through the public process involved in applying the method
- Method
  - Desk and Field questions

- Data spreadsheets
- Spreadsheet calculations
- Normalization process
- Ranking process (Jenks Optimization)
- Documentation provided in spreadsheets and manuals

Items identified for further discussion:

- WRB meeting with Dr. Adamus (March 24<sup>th</sup>)
  - Note – WRB needs to complete a previous obligation during this meeting
  - Note – reason for follow-up meetings with Paul is to complete last requirements of contract
  - Complete review of all calculations for functions and values used in the method (\*request for a cheat sheet of some sort to help WRB and others to easily see calculations for each of the functions and values)
  - Review the unanswered list of WRB questions from the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Review confidence in metrics used to calculate each of the function and value scores to help inform options for rolling up the scores (homework assignments for Paul, interested WRB members, also part of the SEAKFHP sponsored Technical Review process)
  - Discuss anadromous fish function and value scores specifically, how does the WRB want to include these in the final roll up summarization?
- WRB meeting with Dr. Adamus (April 7<sup>th</sup>)
  - Complete any unaddressed items from March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Discuss consideration of the CBJ AA selections and discuss implications (lack of reference to all wetland areas in CBJ/reference to other wetland sites in SE/comparison to other uses of WESPAK-SE in the region, such as SEAL Trust In Lieu Fee Credit/Debit proposal)
    - Discuss WRB interest in looking at normalization process for current 332 CBJ AAs – is there interest in normalizing this differently?
    - Are their options for adding in additional data (example off site options; Tier II approach used in Alberta)

- Needs to be a consideration for any future data collection contracts
  - Discuss summarization process for the CBJ data
    - What is the role of the WRB for recommending a process?
      - Is there a charge for the WRB?
      - Teri noted the CBJ would like to have a scoring method that is acceptable to the ACOE
    - SEAL Trust presentation opportunity – by the date of this meeting, SEAL Trust (Allison) will be able to share an update on the summarization process they will present to the ACOE as part of their In Lieu Fee work
    - Review summarization options shared by Paul
    - Consider ranking option proposed by Chris
    - As needed discuss how rolling up functions and values may play a role in overall summarization. Are functions the priority? How do values contribute? How can weighting be applied? Discuss options for applying values
    - Discuss Jenks Optimization method used to understand how this impacted the ranking scores; others have used %; discuss as needed
- WRB meeting with Dr. Adamus (April 21<sup>st</sup>)
  - Complete any unaddressed items from April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Continue discussion on life of assessments (note language currently provided in draft CBJ Juneau Wetland Management Plan)
    - Should the plan note options for periodic checks?
  - Discuss how future changes in the method may impact the current work completed by the CBJ
- Other WRB meetings
  - Complete any unaddressed items from April 7<sup>th</sup> meeting
  - Discuss and assign tasks as needed to address how the WRB will proceed in scoring the CBJ assessments
- SEAKFHP Sponsored Technical Review

- The WESPAK-SE method normalizes the data based upon the selection of AAs under consideration, is their interest as part of the review to consider a preferred process for developing a norm or standard for SE?

D. Next meeting

Wetland methodology workshop and WRB Regular Meeting, Thursday March 24, 5:15 pm in the Marine View 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room

- E. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.