

MINUTES
WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING

September 20, 2012, 5:15 p.m. Marine View Bldg 4th Floor Conference Room

Meeting Summary

Board Members Present: Hal Geiger, Ron Berg, Andrew Campbell, Brenda Wright, Jerry Medina, Lisa Hoferkamp, Dan Miller

Board Members Absent: K Koski

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Nicole Jones, Teri Camery, CBJ Planners

Public Present: John Hudson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Meeting called to order at 5:18 p.m.

II. May 17, 2012 Regular Meeting minutes and June 21, 2012 Site Visit minutes were approved, no corrections identified.

III. **Agenda was approved.**

IV. **Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items**

None

V. Board Comments.

Mr. Berg requested that in future site visits, discussions should take place at specific stopping points so everyone can hear all the information. Mr. Berg said that he did not gain much from the airport site visit because the discussion was taking place in two separate vehicles.

VI. **Agenda Items**

Restoration Site Presentation by John Hudson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Hudson provided an overview of the project entitled, “Aquatic and Riparian Habitat in Juneau—an Inventory and Assessment,” a joint project with USFWS and the Juneau Watershed Partnership. The goals of the project are to: 1) inventory and map habitat improvement projects; 2) evaluate projects to inform future restoration projects; and 3) identify projects that require additional habitat improvements. Methods include research, determine project goals and

objectives, categorize projects, conduct field assessments/ evaluations, determine outcomes, and report findings.

The project evaluated 81 restoration projects—29 in Duck Creek, 15 in the Mendenhall River, 11 in Jordan Cree, 6 in Lemon Creek, 3 in Switzer Creek, 2 in Vanderbilt Creek, 2 in Gold Creek, and 13 in other areas. Focus was on impaired waterbodies. Mendenhall River projects were primarily rip-rap.

Of the 81 projects, 73 had goals and objectives. Most projects were in the category of fish passage, bank stabilization, and aquatic habitat creation. The most successful projects were for fish passage, streambank stabilization, created wetlands (borrow pits), and stormwater management. Projects with mixed success included created wetlands (uplands), channel rehabilitation/relocation, and revegetation.

Mr. Hudson reviewed several case studies regarding fish passage improvement and streambank stabilization. He noted the Riverbend revetment along the Mendenhall River which was built in the mid 1980s. Tree planting was not completed as required. Some willow and alder have moved in, but the area remains largely unvegetated. However the Vintage Park revetment, immediately adjacent to the Riverbend revetment, was built in 1997 with soil placed on top of the rip-rap and trees planted. This area is now well-vegetated. Mr. Hudson noted that this case demonstrates that rip-rap itself is not the problem—it just needs to be revegetated to make it ecologically functional.

Mr. Hudson reviewed several more case studies including: 1) the Mendenhall River Engineered Log Jam, to protect a pedestrian bridge; 2) Duck Creek Channel Rehabilitation from 1997-98 between Taku and Mendenhall Boulevards, to improve habitat, water quality and quantity, and reduce flood risk; 3) Nancy Street created wetland from an old borrow pit, 2003, highly successful but still has low oxygen levels; 4) Pederson Hill Creek upland to wetland conversion with a pond connected to a salmon stream to create salmon habitat, 2006, functioning well with good water quality, salmon are using it, but it needs more riparian vegetation along the edges; 5) Auke Rec Bypass Wetland Mitigation, 1999, DOT was required to build two emergent wetlands at either end of the project, but there was no water table to sustain the wetlands and the work was never completed, reverted to upland; 6) Duck Creek Channel relocation, 1998, generally successful but needs additional vegetation.

Mr. Hudson also identified several projects where additional work is needed: 1) Jordan Creek Riparian Enhancement, at previous ORV crossing area, revegetation in progress; 2) Duck Creek Channel Relocation, needs revegetation and invasive plant control; 3) Mendenhall River revetments, needs revegetation and riparian enhancement; 4) Nancy Street wetland, needs riparian thinning and enhancement, invasive weed control; 5) Kingfisher Pond at the police station, needs invasive weed control; 6) West Creek (at Sunny Point Overpass), needs riparian enhancement.

Mr. Hudson ended his presentation by summarizing lessons learned from the study. Future and existing projects will benefit from: site specific project designs; performance-based permit conditions and criteria; technical/construction oversight during implementation; compliance

monitoring; post-implementation maintenance; training on fish passage design, streambank stabilization, and revegetation techniques.

Mr. Medina asked about enforcement on the Auke Rec Bypass Project, and board members had a general discussion about the need for follow-up on projects. Ms. Camery described how Mr. Hudson's recommendations could be integrated in the Board's advisory review on projects. Ms. Hoferkamp asked about how these recommendations would be addressed if Alaska had a coastal management program. Ms. Camery replied that the primary benefit of a coastal program would be the permit coordination among local, state, and federal agencies. Other benefits would be dependent on how the coastal program was designed, such as whether or not the Juneau Wetlands Management Plan could be specifically adopted under the program

VII. Pending Permits and Updates

1. Habitat Mapping and Analysis Project

Ms. Camery explained that this is the long-awaited Juneau Wetlands Management Plan and stream mapping update. The Request for Proposals for the LiDAR and aerial imagery will be released in December with work to be conducted in the spring. The final wetland methodology will be developed in spring/summer 2013 with Dr. Paul Adamus and with extensive involvement from the Board. This work includes free training, which will also be offered to the board. Field work for the JWMP Update will take place in spring/summer 2014.

2. Other Permits

Ms. Camery noted that the Lemon Creek Gravel Extraction permit has expired and she expects the applicant, SECON, to apply for another one soon.

3. Goodbye to Nicole Jones.

Ms. Camery and board members thanked Ms. Jones many times over for her work on many different board projects, and encouraged her to consider a long-distance relationship or a new boyfriend so she will stay in Juneau.

VIII. Planning Commission Liaison Update.

None.

IX. Next meeting: October meeting to be announced, on a Thursday that we can secure a quorum.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:50 p.m.