ADVISORY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT TO TECHNICAL COMMITTEES

Assignments from April 20, 2009 Advisory Committee Meeting to Technical Committees:

Meet on an as-needed basis to do the following:

1. For all Technical Committees, provide comments on the potential local project, "Emergency Overflow Spillway." The information on this project, along with comments from the Advisory Committee's April 20th meeting is shown below.
2. For the ETC, the Advisory Committee requests that they reevaluate their proposed "Habitat Restoration Projects in the Upper Basin Tributaries" and make a decision on whether they want this to be considered as a local project and if so to better define the concept, and to specifically list upper basin projects and details where this might be practical. The information on this project, along with comments from the Advisory Committee's April 20th meeting is shown below.

Note: AC requests TCs to aim for level and detail of presentation of Army Corps Powerpoint presentation for the Skagit GI Measures

Assignment Due

Submit to Tom Karsh by 5:00 p.m. on May 6, 2009

Emergency Overflow Spillway – New From Larry Kunzler

Description

Widen the 3 bridge corridor 500 feet (or more) and install an emergency overflow spillway (not to be confused with an overflow levee) in the Avon area. This spillway would only be activated when flows reach 145,000 cfs at the Mt. Vernon gage. In the last 82 years, the spillway would only have had to be used once and possibly twice (1990 and 1995). The floodwaters would then flow naturally towards Padilla Bay, which is where they are going to flow anyway during a major flood event. It's not like we would be spilling the entire flow of the river. During the 1990 flood event, the spillway would only have been spilling water for a period of 11 hours for an average of 5,100 cfs per hour. We would have to make sure that the water did not cross Highway 20 by either installing a berm on the south side of the highway or by raising the highway. Granted, during a 100-year event the spillway could be spilling as much as 30-50,000 cfs but what is the alternative? To have the water flow through the City of Burlington or be forced into the Samish River Basin?

Table 2 (cont.) – Locally Developed Projects for April 20th Meeting

	Comments (Focused on Criteria)	Missing Info.
Emergency Overflow Spillway – New From Larry Kunzler (cont)		
There would be many benefits to the spillway approach: • It would allow the flood waters to pass the City of Burlington and spill onto the floodplain in a safe manner before it reaches the City of Mt. Vernon thus saving the Urban areas from catastrophic flooding and cutting the cost of the current proposals drastically (i.e. the Mt. Vernon floodwall wouldn't have to be anywhere near as high as is currently being proposed). • By allowing the farmland to be subject to flooding (once in the past 82 years) it would preserve the farmland from urban encroachment. Fir Island and Samish River flooding would be drastically lowered. • By designating the area as a floodway it would prohibit further development in the natural corridor where under current conditions the floodwaters are going to go anyway thus decreasing future damages. Further, it would keep the floodway designation out of the Urban areas which under current conditions in all likelihood it will be placed. • Out of all the projects looked at, this could be the most affordable; provide the most benefits, meet the three E's, perhaps even be acceptable to the majority of the voters who should have the final say in any proposed project. Admittedly, the people living in this floodway corridor would object, but what they must realize is that if we do nothing, which is what we have done for the last 100 years, during any catastrophic levee failure or even if the levees hold under current conditions the water will end up in that corridor as they have in so many floods in the past. • What about the fish you ask? Wouldn't providing an emergency overflow spillway put fish out onto the floodplain? The simple answer is yes. Once in the last 82 years we would have impacted some fish. In the last 82 years, there have been many levee failures. The most recent on Fir Island in 1990. How many fish were impacted by the levee failures? If there were no levees, how many fish are stranded on the floodplain? The fish issue like any other adverse impact can be mitigated if given a chance.		

AC DISCUSSION FOR EMERGENCY OVERFLOW SPILLWAY– send to TCs for discussion and evaluation

- Ag community was opposed to this in the past.
- The AC believes it needs more information on the 5-year overflow level from Corps. They request that Amy look into this and whether or not the Corps is resolving this internally. There was some thought that this may have been preliminary and is still up in the air. AC members recall Corps technical staff relating that there may be "too much water to do anything else." There was general agreement that a 5-year level would likely kill this concept. Previously the Corps said you can't have mechanically-controlled structure to release water. Not clear if there is a policy, but there may be some discomfort. The bottom line is that the less left that is subject to possible human error, the better. It relates to a level of confidence. It was also confirmed that there is nothing that says a local community can't take an action on its own even if the Corps doesn't support it financially.

Potential Project - Habitat restoration projects in Upper basin tributaries – From Environmental Technical Committee – Needs better definition from Environmental Technical Committee

- Habitat restoration projects in Upper basin tributaries could be evaluated for habitat restoration projects with flood damage reduction potential.
- Benefits include reduction in sedimentation and LWD (mass wasting) and increased off channel flood water attenuation (storage).
- Possible locations include Hansen, Coal, Wiseman, Jones creeks etc.
- Sources of information include the Chinook Recovery Plan and the Skagit Watershed Council strategy document and "Three year list."

From ETC - Response: There are no new specific habitat restoration projects being proposed at this time. Rather the ETC recommendation was to consider future restoration of the upper river tributaries (primarily the north side; e.g., Hansen Creek) if needed for mitigation or as stand-alone restoration projects. Restoring these tributary natural processes should have multiple benefits including increased flood storage and reduced sedimentation. It is acknowledged that flood risk reduction from any individual upper tributary restoration project is probably minimal.

From LUTC – Response: The LUTC does not have any information/comments related to this task at this time.

From D&D District TC – Response: The D&D District TC does not have any information/comments related to this task at this time.

AC DISCUSSION FOR HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS IN THE UPPER BASIN– send to ETC for discussion and evaluation

- Genesis was acknowledgement of cumulative effects.
- Why not Nookachamps Creek? Focus is on reducing flood input from tribs, possibly by increasing natural flood storage in headwater areas. Response was that the ETC spokesperson was not aware of a project on Nookachamps that would achieve this.
- This measure is not focused on mitigation. Mitigation projects could be drawn from Chinook Recovery Plan.
- There was some discussion about the Tidegate and Fish Initiative but there was much confusion about how all this relates.
- Questions about whether it should remain in the CFHMP; send back to ETC for more work.