

Public Briefing on the River Plan / North Reach Science Panel

You are invited to public briefing to discuss the results of a science panel that was convened to review work related to the River Plan / North Reach. This briefing will provide attendees with a preview of the information that will be summarized for the City Council on August 4th at 2 pm.

Public Briefing

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

4:30 – 6 pm

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Agenda

4:30 – 5:15 Presentation by City staff and consultant

5:15 – 5:45 Q and A

5:45 – 6:00 Talk with City staff/consultants

Background on Science Panel

The River Plan / North Reach was unanimously adopted by City Council on April 15, 2010. The plan allows applicants for development in the River Environmental Zone to pay for off-site mitigation under certain circumstances. The off-site mitigation payment will be paid to the City in the form of a fee-in-lieu until a mitigation bank is operating in the North Reach (The fee-in-lieu is scheduled to sunset in 2 years). City staff and consultants are finalizing the method that will be used to determine the mitigation fee. City staff wanted the mitigation payment calculation method to be: 1) open and transparent; 2) represent the best available science - well tested on multiple habitat types and suitable for the Willamette River; 3) publicly available (non-proprietary); 4) allow for "in kind" tracking (i.e.: in-water restoration for in-water impacts); 5) accepted by multiple state and federal agencies; and 6) allow mitigation to stay in the North Reach service area. The proposed method combines two models, the Habitat Evaluation Procedure (HEP) and the Habitat Equivalency Assessment (HEA).

City staff convened a science panel to review and provide feedback on the scientific integrity of the HEP/HEA approach. The City sent out a call for nominations of scientists, and selected a panel that collectively had experience with habitat valuation in the types of habitat found in the North Reach. The panel members chosen were:

- Derek Booth, PhD, PE, PG, President, Stillwater Sciences, Inc/University of Washington
- Bobby Cochran, Executive Director, Willamette Partnership
- Doug DeHart, PhD, Fisheries Biologist (retired, USFWS/ODFW)
- Brent Hadaway, ICF/ Jones and Stokes
- Jimmy Kagen, Director, Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center, OSU
- Mary Kentula, PhD, Wetland Ecologist, EPA
- Brian Lightcap, Wetland Ecologist, (retired, Army Corps of Engineers)
- Randy Moore, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, OSU
- Stan van de Wetering, Siletz Tribes

The panel met on June 18th for 4.5 hours. There were two public comment periods, one prior to and one following the panel's deliberations. The City asked the panel to provide responses to the following questions at the meeting and in writing:

1. To the extent known, or within your particular area of expertise, what are the pros and cons of using a combination of HEP and HEA and the HSI quantification? Are there other methodologies we should consider that meet or exceed the criteria identified?
2. Did we get the right species? Are we missing a species or habitat?
3. We are proposing to use peer reviewed HSIs to establish values for the HEP model. Are there some that need to be updated? Are there species/habitats that do not have HSIs? What process should we use in those situations?
4. By utilizing an “in kind” approach, rarity of different habitat types should be addressed. However other factors, such as proximity to other habitats, patch size, or diversity of contiguous habitats are all important ecological concepts that are not captured in this approach. Are there certain additional considerations (“weightings”) that should be added?

The feedback was technical and far reaching. The City is in the process of analyzing the information and will present its analysis at the Public Briefing on July 27th. Three key things the City heard were:

- use a functional rather than a species based assessment method;
- prioritization of in-kind or out-of-kind mitigation should be based on the City’s ecological goals.
- include an adaptive management component

Materials provided to the panel as background

- River Plan introduction, Volume 1A, <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=51498&a=295514> (Prepared by the City)
- River Plan Code, Volume 1B, Code Sections 33.475.400 <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=51498&a=295509> (Prepared by the City)
- River Plan Natural Resources Inventory, Volume 3, <http://www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=44745> (Prepared by the City)
- Habitat Valuation, June 4, 2010 Draft (Prepared by Tetra Tech)
- HEA valuation executive summary and salmonid values (prepared by Portland Harbor Trustees)
- Power Point used to describe HEP/ HEA to stakeholders (Prepared by Tetra Tech)

Information that will be provided at the Public Briefing

- Science Panel Meeting Notes
- Individual scientists’ responses to City’s questions
- Summary of the scientists’ response to City’s questions
- City’s response to the Science Panel feedback
- Public comments recorded at the meeting
- City’s response to the public comments
- DVD of the Science Panel meeting

For more information

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