

Levee Vegetation Workshop (April 4, 2012)  
 Local Perspectives – Pierce County (presented by Lorin Reinelt)  
 Outline

- Overview
  - Four major river systems in Pierce County flowing off of Mt. Rainier
    - Puyallup, Carbon, White, Nisqually
  - Over 70 miles of facilities (levees and revetments)
    - About half the length historically in the PL 84-99 program
  - Three eras of levee construction
    - 1910s – Lower Puyallup and Lower White following decision to permanently divert the White River to the Puyallup after the 1906 flood. Recommendation from ACOE to Pierce and King counties because the distance to Puget Sound was shorter via Puyallup River. Levee construction was by Inter-County River Improvement
    - 1930s/1940s – Levees built on Middle Puyallup and Carbon Rivers post 1933 flood (authorized by 1936 Flood Control Act) – included 10 miles of levee near Orting and construction of Mud Mountain Dam.
    - 1960s – Levees built with Washington State funding dedicated to new levee construction. ACOE recommended straightening and narrowing the rivers to keep water, sediment and wood flowing through the system. Focus was on Middle Puyallup and Carbon; distance between levees was narrowed to about 250 feet.
  - Last 15 years (post 1996 flood) – emphasis on levee setback projects, including Ford and Soldiers Home levee projects connecting 192 acres of floodplain with the river and setting back 2.8 miles of levee
  
- Summary of Participation in PL 84-99 Program
  - Pierce County participates in both the emergency operations and rehabilitation of flood control works components of the PL 84-99 program
  - There are 28 flood management facilities (primarily levees) that have historically been part of the PL 84-99 program (Puyallup River – 17; Carbon River – 8; White River – 2; Nisqually River – 1)
  - There are three categories of ACOE rating: acceptable, minimally acceptable, unacceptable (Current status: acceptable – 2 facilities (Neadham Rd. and Soldiers Home levee); minimally acceptable – 18; unacceptable – 8)
  
- Pierce County Challenges and Approach
  - Pierce County wants to remain in the PL 84-99 program; we have received ~\$13.3 million over the past 20 years
  - Pierce County must comply with the Vegetation Management Program contained in the inter-governmental agreement between Pierce County and Puyallup Tribe of Indians
    - Source: Order Adopting Stipulation Re: Vegetation Removal (No. C79-269T) – issued by the U.S. District Court Western District of Washington at Tacoma

- Excerpt: “It is hereby ordered, adjudged and decreed that:
  1. Vegetation shall not be removed from the banks of any river or stream or any gravel bar in the Puyallup River drainage basin, except as permitted by the Puyallup River Vegetation Management Program.”
- In 1990, Congress passed a land settlement agreement between the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, local governments in Pierce County, the State of Washington, the United States of America, Port of Tacoma and certain private property owners (e.g., railroads and landowners).
  - This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> large land settlement agreement in U.S. history
- Pierce County is also committed to working with partners on salmon recovery in the Puyallup and Nisqually river basins; Pierce County is the lead entity for WRIAs 10/12.
- Pierce County’s strategy is to balance the flood risk reduction goals of our rivers flood hazard management efforts with the need to comply with the Vegetation Management Program stipulated by the U.S. District Court and agreed to by the parties involved
- Pierce County values are relationship with the ACOE and our cooperative efforts under the PL 84-99 program
- Pierce County is committed to salmon recovery and working with our partners, including tribes, the services (NOAA Fisheries, USFWS), and Washington state agencies.
- As noted by Brig. General John McMahon – “We need to find balanced solutions to do right by the levee systems and also meet the requirements of ESA and the tribal vegetation management program
- Our Challenge: How can we take the ACOE levee vegetation management policy, take into account ESA requirements, and take into account tribal treaty rights, and find workable solutions