The PSNERP Decision to Not Fund

The Deschutes Estuary Project

PSNERP – (Puget Sound Nearshore Estuary Restoration Project) is a study partnership made up of members of the Army Corps of Engineers and WDFW. Formed in 2001 to determine the ecologic needs of Puget Sound, PSNERP offers independent, expert opinion regarding Puget Sound ecosystems. Twice, PSNERP has denied funding for the Deschutes Estuary Project, based on its analysis of the benefit to cost ratio, as well as other factors such as community support and risk to feasibility. An important risk to feasibility that was identified for the Deschutes in the context of the PSNERP study was the potential to increase sedimentation in the Federally authorized and maintained navigation channel. In essence, the Corps couldn't support one program (Ecosystem Restoration) which increased costs to it's program responsibilities to maintain navigation since removal of the dam would increase sediment aggradation in the Federal Navigation Channel resulting in negative impacts on Corps operations and maintenance of the channel.

The following emails were sent between April 18th and July 7thin 2015. They are presented here in chronological order to explain why PSNERP determined twice to not fund ("de-couple") the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project. This presentation is necessary because no formal documentation of this decision from PSNERP reportedly exists.

Senders of these emails are identified as follows:

Jack Havens - (bike and fish @…) Co-chair CLIPA

Margen Carlson - Deputy Asst. Director – Habitat, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Theresa Mitchell - Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project, Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Habitat Program | Restoration Division

Allen Miller – CLIPA Board of Directors member

Karen Fraser – Senator, State of Washington 22nd District

Jessie Winkler, Chief, Civil Works Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District

After hearing that the Deschutes Estuary Project was "de-coupled", Jack Havens sends an email asking Margen Carlson (WDFW) what that term means.

From: bikeandfish@ [mailto:bikeandfish@] **Sent:** Saturday, April 18, 2015 11:32 AM
To: Carlson, Margen L (DFW)
Subject: De-coupling

Margen,

Thanks for the productive meeting with CLIPA last Thursday regarding the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project.

You informed us that the project was "de-coupled". Could you explain to us what that term means and its ramifications.

Thank You,

Jack Havens, CLIPA

Carlson replies a few days later:

From: Carlson, Margen L (DFW) [mailto:Margen.Carlson@] **Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2015 8:33 AM
To: bikeandfish@
Cc: Davis, Jeffrey P (DFW)
Subject: RE: De-coupling

Good morning Jack,

I enjoyed meeting with you and the other CLIPA members last week, as well. I apologize for my delayed reply – I've had the pleasure of spending most of this week in our regional offices, which has kept me away from the computer.

In our meeting, I mentioned that neither the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, nor the Army Corps of Engineers is pursuing the restoration of the Deschutes Estuary. This is the reason Deputy Director Joe Stohr referred to PSNERP and Deschutes Estuary restoration as "de-coupled." Preliminary restoration designs do of course appear in older materials from the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project because it was part of the analysis at one time, as were nearly all the other medium and large river mouths in Puget Sound.

Thank you again for the meeting and for the chance to provide some clarification in follow up.

Regards,

*Margen

Margen Carlson
Deputy Assistant Director – Habitat
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way N., Olympia, Washington 98501-1091
(360) 902-2229 – office

Havens asks Carlson why the de-coupling took place.

From: bikeandfish@ [mailto:bikeandfish] **Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2015 2:04 PM
To: Carlson, Margen L (DFW)
Cc: Davis, Jeffrey P (DFW)
Subject: RE: De-coupling

Margen,

Thanks for the response. I will be reporting this information to the Alliance for a Healthy South Sound (AHSS) Council soon. Some Council members may want to know why the de-coupling occurred. Can you or anyone else provide me with the reason/s why this was done. (Highlight added at the time of original email writing.)

Thank you for your help.

Jack Havens

Carlson responds by having Theresa Mitchell (more familiar with the workings of PSNERP) to respond to Havens.

From: Carlson, Margen L (DFW)
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2015 2:38 PM
To: bikeandfish@; Mitchell, Theresa C (DFW) **Cc:** Davis, Jeffrey P (DFW)
Subject: RE: De-coupling

Theresa,

Could you please speak to the reasons Deschutes Estuary restoration was not advanced via PSNERP (see highlight below)? I believe the answer has to do with a potential conflict between the Army Corps' navigation mandate and its ecosystem restoration mandate. It may also have related to the comparison among potential projects of ecosystem benefit/cost analyses. I can follow up with you on Monday if you have any questions about this request.

Many thanks, and have a great weekend.

*Margen

Mitchell responds to Havens and Carlson

From: Mitchell, Theresa C (DFW) [mailto:Theresa.Mitchell@] **Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2015 2:51 PM
To: Carlson, Margen L (DFW); bikeandfish@
Cc: Davis, Jeffrey P (DFW)
Subject: RE: De-coupling

All –

Margen you are correct. Essentially, the Corps could not support one program of the Corps (Ecosystem Restoration) increasing costs to another program of the Corps (Navigation) and they were unwilling to consider it further. Removal of the 5th Avenue dam would very likely increase sediment aggradation in the Federal Navigation Channel adjacent to the site (Port of Olympia navigation channel), resulting in unacceptable negative impacts to the current Corps operations and maintenance of that channel.

Best,

Theresa Mitchell

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Habitat Program | Restoration Division
360.902.2750 - office
www.pugetsoundnearshore.org

Senator Karen Fraser references her meeting with WDFW

-----Original Message-----
From: Fraser, Sen. Karen [mailto:Karen.Fraser@] Sent: Monday, June 08, 2015 6:28 PM
To: allen@; Jay Manning; 'Robert Wubbena' Cc: Hunt, Rep. Sam; Reykdal, Rep. Chris
Subject: FW: Deschutes (UNCLASSIFIED)

I met with Dept of Fish and Wildlife today. They are in alignment with the Corps of Engineers priorities as stated below.

Senator Fraser references email letter from Jessica Winkler US Army Corps of Engineers

-----Original Message-----
From: Winkler, Jessica NWS [mailto:Jessica.G.Winkler@] Sent:
Thursday, May 28, 2015 4:30 PM
To: Fraser, Sen. Karen
Subject: Deschutes (UNCLASSIFIED)

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Caveats: NONE

Senator Fraser,
Thank you for the conversation this morning regarding the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) and the Deschutes Estuary.
As discussed, the Corps in coordination with WDFW has not identified the Deschutes project to move forward for further consideration under the PSNERP study based on our analysis of the benefit to cost ratio, as well as other factors such as community support and risk to feasibility. A important risk to feasibility that we identified for the Deschutes in the context of the PSNERP study was the potential to increase sedimentation in the Federally authorized and maintained navigation channel. Although the Corps and WDFW are not evaluating the Deschutes further under the PSNERP study authority, the Corps has not developed a formal position on the dam removal at Deschutes outside of PSNERP. If a non-Federal entity proposed to remove the dam at Deschutes, they would be required to coordinate that proposal with the Corps under our Section 408 permitting process (33 U.S.C. 408).

The Seattle District website for the PSNERP project contains links for the entire draft feasibility report/environmental impact statement. Appendix G specifically addresses the ecosystem benefit model. As requested, the last page of Appendix G includes the list of the numeric benefits of each of the sites we evaluated and is attached.

http://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/ProgramsandProjects/Projec
ts/PugetSoundNearshoreEcosystemRestoration.aspx

In 2012, the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project contracted an A/E firm to complete the conceptual designs for 36 sites. The reports and other key PSNERP documents are located at the below listed link. The conceptual design report on the Deschutes Estuary is also attached.

http://www.pugetsoundnearshore.org/cdr.html

Please let me know if you have any further questions or concerns. I also wanted to thank you for your quick and informative response on the status of PSNERP in the budget! Jessie

Jessie Winkler
Chief, Civil Works Branch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Seattle District
4735 East Marginal Way South
Seattle, WA 98134
206-764-3462

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Senator Fraser states her findings upon speaking to the Corps- “the environmental benefits of Deschutes dam removal are strikingly low!”

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Fraser, Sen. Karen <Karen.Fraser@>
Date: Tue, Jul 7, 2015 at 9:20 PM
Subject: Re: Capitol Lake
To: Allen Miller <allen@>
Cc: Denny Heck <denny@>, Robert Wubbena <rwubbena@>, Denis Curry <denisc733@>, Jack Havens <bikeandfish@>, "Owen, Brad" <Brad.Owen@>, Chris Liu <chris.liu@>, "Arlen Harris (DES)" <arlen.harris@>

Hello all---
I spoke with the Corps. The essence of what they say is the following.

They have highly deprioritized habitat work by them on the lower Deschutes mainly because the environmental benefits of this project (dam removal) are very low compared to environmental benefits of other proposed projects in Puget Sound. They have quantified this and I have their list. The environmental benefits of Deschutes dam removal are strikingly low !

They take other factors into secondary consideration in the rankings, such as "risks". In this case, a major risk is the silting up of the shipping channel.

They have now given high priority to about 11 projects in Puget Sound.
Judging by the very low numerical ranking of Deschutes dam removal, it seems unlikely to be a viable project for a very long time, if ever.

Hope this is helpful.

---Karen

Sent from my iPad

Questions regarding this report may be directed to Jack Havens, bikeandfish@ or 360-.