

Proposal for using a Public and Private Partnership to restore the Edmonds Marsh Near-Shore Estuary and Native Wildlife Habitat to its highest potential.

Background:

In 2021-2022 WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Manager Jason Mulvihill Kuntz, Edmonds City Council Member and WRIA 8 delegate Diane Buckshnis and Edmonds Citizen Jack Faris were tasked by PSP Salmon Recovery Partnership to work on establishing a Public and private partnership with high wealth donor foundations and citizens to quickly fund the deficiencies at the Ballard Locks at a price of \$35M. One of the main reasons is that the Seattle area has 13 Billionaires and many are already donating to environmental challenges. The Project ran into a stall with the Army Corp of Engineers and eventually the PSP Pilot Project retired as Council member Buckshnis retired after 13 years.

The purchase and restoration of the Edmonds Marsh will be very expensive and complex as it is contaminated property with an aged WSDOT stormwater pipe. The clean-up is ending soon and it appears that WSDOT, due to costs, would like a restricted covenant covering their stormwater pipe and this decree will delay the entire purchase and restoration due to red tape or it may mothball the restoration completely due to unknown costs associated with contamination. It's obvious that money is a factor for this restoration and this proposed concept does not give the "ending" of a decree protecting that stormwater pipe with a restrictive covenant that is expected in 2024.

This solution relies heavily on private donors and a functioning partnership with a goal of optimal restoration of the Native Wildlife Habitat which includes the Edmonds Marsh near-shore estuary. An excellent example of a recent private public partnership can be found in New York City with Barry Diller and Diane von Furstenberg spending \$260M for the renovation of a dilapidated pier into a public park called "Tiny Island" (60-minutes had a good piece on it).

Using this concept, the key objective is for the "ideal restoration designs" which necessitates the removal of lower portion of the WSDOT Stormwater Pipe (eventually it will fail) and surrounding soil. In its place a separate "stormwater channel" that connects with the Point Edwards Stormwater pipe to create a modern infiltration stormwater system channel to the south with considerations of the steep sloped hill (embankment) below the Point Edwards Community complex. The Marsh tidal channel to the north would lead to a shallow lagoon (similar to Meadowdale Beach) for fish foraging and resting and native wildlife preservation.

This concept by no means suggests that the individual(s) or Foundations donating the funds will be responsible for ALL costs. Chevron's responsibility of a "clean property" once the WSDOT stormwater pipe is removed will be part of this plan. And WSDOT's acknowledgement that stormwater pipe will eventually fail and costs associated with removal. Ultimately, WSDOT could provide title of the property to the City or another Agency as a cost factor for the pipe removal and Chevron could match the \$9M for soil excavation. The private donor(s) would be the remaining source of funding so as to expediate the restoration process and lawsuit or potential lawsuit quagmire. Barry Diller was quoted as saying he would never work with a City or State legislators and Agencies again because of all the red tape.

Goal:

Establish private and public partnerships with individuals or foundations to secure funding for the design and restoration of the Edmonds Marsh near-shore estuary and Native Habitat Reserve. The City has established Fund #17 for private donors that is designated specifically for Marsh Restoration. Finalize ownership of Marsh at a cost \$8.1M, paid for by taxpayers with gas tax, that is currently held in a Trust. An estimated cost for design, permitting, construction, and restorations is estimated at \$150M and this number will need to be substantiated. Pursue donors vigorously with proposal team that could include Diane Buckshnis, Jack Faris, City Official, WRIA-8 Representative and any others needed to round out the team.

Objectives:

This Public-Private Partnership would have a consortium of members from the Governor's Office, DOE, WSDOT, Chevron, PSP, WRIA-8, Tulalip Tribe, The City and Port of Edmonds, Joe Scordino (mostly knowledgeable citizen scientist), Diane Buckshnis (former Council Member and PSP, WRIA 8 delegate), Jack Faris (representing private institutional knowledge and contacts), Point Edwards' delegate (largest private stakeholder group) and any other stakeholder or key player.

The key now is TIME and having sufficient time to pull together and form this consortium, contract with consultants for the most innovative designs for the stormwater infiltration system in light of increased density and more impervious surfaces for stormwater drains and the threat of sea-level rise occurring faster than anticipated. And contracting for design specialists for restoration of the Marsh with consideration for the retention of a shallow lagoon in light of the faster and greater geomorphic events due to Climate Change and sea-level rise.

Prepared by Diane Buckshnis

D.Buckshnis@comcast.net

206-228-3462