



King County

Water and Land Resources Division

Department of Natural Resources and Parks

King Street Center

201 South Jackson Street, Suite 5600

Seattle, WA 98104-3855

206-477-4800 Fax 206-296-0192

TTY Relay: 711

Cedar River Council DRAFT Meeting Notes

February 27, 2024 – 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm (scheduled)

Renton Community Center - 1715 Maple Valley Hwy, Renton, WA 98057

I) Call to Order / Welcome

CRC Coordinator Nathan Brown called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. Brown requested attendees pass around note cards written by other attendees prior to start of meeting. Responses were to answer the question:

“What do you envision as the key opportunities and challenges for our council to thrive in the coming years?”

Each attendee introduced themselves and read the answer on the card they had received.

II) Attendee Introductions and Card Responses

- Jay Mirro (King Conservation District): *“Education with the public.”*
- Dan Helmer (local resident): *“Rejuvenation of CRC mission, reconsider meeting frequency, the mode of meeting, bring back in-person meetings, establish outreach and new connections, find ways to hear all voices, and welcome and include all people.”*
- Corinne Helmer (CRC member): *“Have the ‘I Heart the Cedar’ meeting sooner than the fall, get more people and/or organizations involved, have all in-person meetings.”*
- Frank Urabeck (CRC member): *“Have opportunities to reach new people, recruit the next generation, meet people with diverse backgrounds, and get people with the best interests of the organization. Specific goals are needed.”*
- Gerhard Graumann (local resident): *“More preparation for in-basin members, mix of in-person and remote meetings, introduce an environmental land use topic.”*
- Norm Skjelbreia (CRC member): *“Activate others to achieve mission and goal, learn how CRC can adapt to ever changing climate concerns, create the next CRC members.”*
- Steve Hiester (Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council): *“Support the sockeye salmon and the stabilization of salmon production in the Cedar.”*
- Dr. Hugh Brown (CRC member): *“Devising land development and reclamation policies that will have a healthy watershed and sustainable runs of fish. Current policies are the biggest challenge.”*
- Larry Phillips (CRC member): *“Involve younger CRC members to provide new perspectives and broader ideas.”*
- Melinda Woodard (CRC Vice-Chair): *“Key opportunities: Successfully meet CRC’s mission. Key challenges: grow the CRC to ensure the mission is met. Get younger, get bigger, expand, create outreach, be more social, and be more present on social media.”*
- Max Prinsen (CRC Chair): *“Look for opportunities to help with flood control. Communicating in the CR watershed is important.”*
- Tom Allyn (CRC member): *“More in-person meetings, the vibrancy of the Cedar River watershed as a whole in order to provide services. Some opportunities: recruit new members, engage the public, discuss topics that matter on the Cedar River.”*
- Jeff Neuner (CRC member): *“Try to maintain a sense of the needs of the community that lives there, focus on community engagement, support for maintaining the watershed, climate change, salmon, agricultural needs, recreational needs.”*

Also in attendance but did not receive cards were King County Water and Land Resources Division Interim Deputy Director Krista Camenzind, Cedar River Councilmember Greg Fisher, and Cedar River Councilmember Phil Kitzes.

III) Mission Statement

Greg Fisher read aloud the [CRC mission statement](#) to attendees.

IV) Opportunities/Accomplishments and Challenges of 2023 Current Topics

- **Lakeside Industries Asphalt Plant**
 - Accomplishments: As stated by Councilmember Dr. Hugh Brown, the CRC has been very supportive of this topic and the CRC has made Lakeside Industries redefine their work in the area.
 - Challenges: Many questions have been left unanswered. The decision of King County Department of Local Services (DLS) granting the construction permit has been taken to court and all parties are currently awaiting the final decision to either let the permit go forward or be revoked.
- **WRIA (Water Resource Inventory Area) 8**
 - Accomplishments: Councilmember Helmer reported that WRIA 8 continues to be vigilant on funding and restoration projects in the Cedar River Watershed by writing letters and making recommendations to politicians and various superiors.
 - Challenges: Councilmember Phillips commented the CRC could benefit from hearing what WRIA 8 is doing and how it intersects with the CRC. Councilmember Urabeck added WRIA 8's acknowledgement of the CRC's existence, but finding the right person to represent the CRC and engage with WRIA 8 is needed.
- **Fish Habitat Conservation/Restoration (Sockeye)**
 - **Sockeye Recovery Advocacy and Actions**
 - Accomplishments: Councilmember Phillips observed that this topic has brought attention to the fact that every project needs a fish component, how that component benefits it, and how it is associated with a project. The CRC has been consistent in advocating this topic on big restoration projects. Councilmember Allyn mentioned discussions on this topic illuminated a sense of urgency and that the CRC been instrumental in getting all parties maintaining fish runs to act.
 - Challenges: None reported
- **Cedar River Watershed**
 - Accomplishments: Councilmember Helmer acknowledged the connections made between people and organizations during field trips such as the field trip to the Upper Cedar River Watershed.
 - Challenges: Chair Prinsen noted the need to communicate better amongst agencies such as Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) with the public regarding inflow area and operate local dams better to present less hazard, as well as make sure their individual agencies have the same communication/operations components as others.
- **King County Flood Hazard Management Plan Update**

No updates about this topic were provided.
- **Maple Valley Area Council/King County Comprehensive Plan Update**
 - Accomplishments: Steve Hiester mentioned the Greater Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council (GMVUAC) has members who are working diligently with nine different community groups on the 2024 King County Comprehensive Plan Update. At this point in time, King County Executive Dow Constantine has sent his recommendations on the plan to the King County Council.
 - Challenges: None reported
- **SPU Royal Arch Reach Project**

No updates about this topic were provided.
- **Riverbend Restoration Project**
 - Accomplishments: Councilmember Allyn acknowledged the project turning out for the better because of the feedback provided by the CRC to project partners. Chair Prinsen also referred to the CRC providing representation of other parts of the project such as feedback on recreational needs.
 - Challenges: None reported
- **Climate Change**

No updates about this topic were provided.
- **Cedar River Water Quality**

No updates about this topic were provided.
- **Green River PIT Tag Study**

No updates about this topic were provided.

- **Field Activities**

The locations that the CRC explored in 2023 were: the Riverbend project, the SPU Upper Cedar River Watershed, and the SPU Royal Arch Reach project.

V) Discussion Questions

Nathan Brown asked attendees to gather into small groups and write answers to the following questions to aid in future CRC planning. The results from the groups were as follows:

- ***“What questions do you think the CRC needs answered today to help determine CRC’s future?”***
 1. How do we learn what the community wants from the river?
 2. What are tomorrow’s issues for the Cedar River and the Cedar River Basin?
 - Salmon, climate change, habitat restoration, cost benefit analysis
 3. Recognition signage at Riverbend (a type of advertising for stakeholders including CRC)
 4. What is a good, reliable meeting place?
 5. How do we get younger, bigger, more present in community, more social?
 6. Should we begin meeting in person again? More social events?
 7. Shall we make an intentional focus on climate change issues?
 8. Where should CRC dollars come from? This would give a better understanding of CRC needs.
- ***“What outcomes are desired for this work today?”***
 1. Decide if we are meeting in-person or not? How, where, and when do we meet?
 2. Action plan needed: Goals for 2024 and the immediate future? Clarity on goals is needed.
 3. Identify priority topics for 2024 and develop a work plan for those priorities in the short and long term
 4. Effective recruitment of new CRC members (could be replacements or experienced membership)
 5. A sense that CRC has a future in terms of worthwhile engagements and we can still make a difference
- ***“What is good or going well with the CRC?”***
 1. Good staff
 2. Impact on projects
 3. Agency recognition
 4. Talent/diversity
 5. Focus, inter agency collaboration, and sharing info on basin health (Cedar River Salmon Journey)
 6. Cost effective feedback at local grassroots level across jurisdictions
 7. Truth of information and balance sharing of information
 8. A strong media connection
 9. Providing a platform for others
- ***“What challenges or improvements should the CRC prioritize?”***
 1. Recruitment (both ongoing and those leaving, as well as expansion)
 2. Better communication with the public via outreach and social media
 3. Attracting younger people
 4. Cross pollination/Collaboration with other groups
 5. Ensuring topics CRC discusses are engaging and are important to the community
 6. More resources (e.g., money)
 7. Threat assessment to the Cedar River as both CRC and the Cedar River’s health
 8. Role of city liaisons
 9. Time commitments
 10. Accommodating concerns of agency participation
- ***“What actions/needs are required to address/improve challenge or need?”***
 1. In-Person Meetings
 - Why: great staff, creates better engagement and better advocacy, information is shared more freely
 - Potential hybrid or different meeting types to be decided
 - Decide on frequency of meetings, will require a future vote on that from members
 - What do we need from meetings:
 - In-person: a consistent venue
 - Online: can be done, but some may have difficulty with technology
 - What is our budget and its funding source?

- What needs to happen:
 - Agree on an in-person venue
 - Come up with a budget
 - Vote on the frequency of future meetings
- 2. Action plan and goals for 2024
 - Positives
 - Strong history
 - Good mission statement
 - Lots of successes to discuss
 - Strong core team
 - Legacy and member knowledge
 - Negatives
 - Relevance
 - Community desires are unknown
 - Budget
 - People (i.e., staffing, volunteers, interns)
 - Identify priority topics (no formal processes selected to address topics)
 - Actions needed:
 - Survey both the CRC & community on wants and topic desires
 - Outreach method
 - Social media presence
 - A sense that CRC has a future in terms of worthwhile engagements and can still make a difference
 - Possibly create a subcommittee regarding budget & resources
- 3. Effective recruitment of new CRC members (via replacements or experienced membership)
 - Recruitment was considered a positive, a negative and a need for this topic.
 - Negatives:
 - Lack of marketing
 - Infrequent social engagements
 - Lack of social media presence
 - Lack of recruitment
 - Lack of communication, just not happening (sporadic)
 - Action needed:
 - Schedule an 'I ♥ the Cedar River' event
 - Volunteer events
 - Onboarding
 - Project opportunities
 - Recruitment
 - Marketing
 - Money
 - Create a development committee
 - Generate a manufactured topic people will be interested in (e.g. on social media)

VI) Closing/Adjourn

The next meeting is proposed for a future date in early April. Method of meeting in person or virtually was undetermined. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.